THE Female Vertuoso's.

A COMEDY:

As it is Acted at the QUEEN's THEATRE,

By Their Majesties Servants.

First Edition.

Written by

Mr. *THOMAS WRIGHT.*

Oh, what a Midnight Curse has he, whose Side
Is pester'd with a Mood and Figure Bride!
Let mine, ye Gods! if such must be my Fate,
No Logick learn, nor History translate,
But rather be a quiet, humble Fool;
I hate a Wife to whom I go to School.

Dryd. Juv. Sat. 6.

LONDON,
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To the Right Honourable,

CHARLES,

EARL of *WINCHELSEA*, &c.

My LORD,

WERE we to judge of Men by the *Dedications* of this Age, we ſhould have now as many *Hero's* as ever fought for the Conqueſt of *Troy* and *Carthage*, as many *Politicians* as ever ſate in the Senate of *Rome*, and as many *true Wits* as ever flouriſh'd in the Times of *Auguſtus*: But ſuch is the fulſome and laviſh Flattery of our mercenary Writers, that it is almoſt become a Reproach to a Patron to be Commended; for while their common Topicks of Praiſe, applied right or wrong, make all alike, What Rule can we go by, to make a difference between a Coxcomb and a Man of Merit?

Having therefore ſo far ſtudied your Lordſhip, as to be ſatisfied, That you *hate* Commendation as much as you *deſerve* it; I ſhall forbear impoſing upon your Patience and Modeſty with a large and methodical Account of your own Ver-

tues, I leave to the World the Pleaſure to find 'em out; they are too many, to be concealed long; and too great, not to be admir'd as ſoon as known.

And without the Ceremony of a tedious Apology, I crave Your Lordſhip's Patronage for my *FEMALE VERTUOSO*'s; the Deſign of which, as it was drawn ſome Years ago from the great Original of French Comedy, by an Ingenious Friend of mine, who bears now too ſerious a Character in the World, not to reckon ſuch a Trifle among his *Delicta Juventutis*, was laſt Winter, by my Importunities, extorted from him.

I ſhall not tire your Lordſhip with an Account of ſome frivolous Objections rais'd againſt this Firſt Eſſay of mine, by the factious Demi-Wits of the Town, who judge of a PLAY, not by the ſtanding Rules of Art, they never underſtood, but by the narrow Fancy, or mere Caprice, of ſome Conceited Fops their devout Ignorance adores, as Oracles of Sence and Ingenuity.

I ſhall only take notice to Your Lordſhip, That the nice and more judicious ſort of Criticks, whoſe Approbation only a Writer ſhould value, have obſerv'd, That my *Vertuoſo*'s ſtretch in their Projects beyond the Limits of Nature and Reaſon; I do here, with the Candour of an Author not yet hard'ned in the vicious habit of Scribling, freely own it appear'd ſo to me, at firſt; but having, beſides ſome modern Poets, *Ariſtophanes* for a Pattern, I thought that what diverted the Ancients, might meet with ſome Indulgence from our Engliſh Audience. I am ſure, the *Athenians* could laugh to ſee no leſs a Man than *Socrates* expos'd upon their Stage, for contriving a ridiculous way to meaſure the Jump of a Flea; but we are grown Serious, and cannot reliſh Fooleries: I ſubmit, only deſiring my Judges

See the Clouds, Act. 2. Scene 2.

to remember that a Poet may challenge it, not only as his Excuſe, but his Privilege, to carry ſometimes a Jeſt beyond the Bounds:

——————*Liberius ſi*
Dixero quid, ſi forte Jocoſius, hoc mihi Juris
cum venia dabis.

Horace.

I am,

MY LORD,

Your Lordſhip's Moſt Humble

and moſt Devoted Servant,

THO. WRIGHT.

PRO-

PROLOGUE,

Written by Mr. Doggett, *and ſpoken by him.*

ENrag'd to find you never do come near
The Theatre, but when New Plays are here;
I'm come to tell you with a ſerious Face,
Loathing of Wit do's ſhew a want of Grace.
The Time has been, when Sence has ſo prevail'd,
That of full Houſes we have never fail'd,
The Boxes ſtill with Beauties fill'd; the Pit
Was crouded every day with Men of Wit;
The Galleries ſerv'd for poor unthinking Citt.
Side-Boroughs ſtow'd Masks, and keeping Cullies;
And the Stage kept free from *Beaux* and Bullies:
There was ſome other Vermine up and down,
But they for fear of loſing Half a Crown,
Prepare for flight, like Owls at Evening Dawn,
And take to Wing before the Curtain's drawn;
Leaves us here to talk to empty Benches;
You to Whores, and Fools to Orange-Wenches.
This makes me ſpeak, theſe Grievances o'th'Age,
The Poet's Bane, and Ruine of the Stage,
The Fatal Cauſe that makes me look ſo thin;
'T has left me nothing on my Bones but Skin:
My Legs with Pain my Body long has carry'd,
I'm grown ſo weak—ſome cry—Look!—he's marry'd;
As if there was no other Plague, but Wife,
To make a Man a weary of his Life:
We have a greater Curſe to pull us down,
In being forc'd to pleaſe a barbarous Town;
Who damn all Wit, but what they call their own.

DRA-

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

Sir *Maurice Meanwell*, An honeſt rich Citizen.	*Mr.* Underhill.
Meanwell, his Brother.	*Mr.* Hodgſon.
Sir *Timothy Witleſs*, A Country Gentleman.	*Mr.* Bright.
Wittleſs, A *Cambridge* Scholar.	*Mr.* Doggett.
Sir *Maggot Jingle*, A Paraſitical Knight, pretending to Poetry.	*Mr.* Bowman.
Clerimont, A Gentleman of the Town, in love with *Mariana*.	*Mr.* Powell.
Engroſs, A Scrivener.	*Mr.*
Trap, Mr. *Witleſs* his Man.	*Mr.* Bowen.
Pick-pockets.	
Bully.	*Mr.* Hains.

WOMEN.

Lady *Meanwell*, An imperious Wife; great Pretender to Wit.	*Mrs.* Leigh.
Lovewitt, Lady *Meanwell*'s Daughter by a former Husband; an Admirer of Platonick Love, yet in Love with *Clerimont*.	*Mrs.* Knight.
Mariana, Sir *Maurice*'s Daughter by a former Wife.	*Mrs.* Bracegirdle.
Catchat, Lady *Meanwell*'s Siſter, a ſtale Virgin, who fancies every Man is in Love with her.	*Mrs.* Mountfort.
Lucy, *Mariana*'s Maid.	*Mrs.* Rogers.

Scene, *LONDON.*

THE Female Vertuoso's.

ACT I.

SCENE, *Sir* Maurice Meanwell's *Houſe:*

Enter *Lovewitt*, and *Mariana.*

Lovewitt. LOok you, Siſter, if you have a Mind we ſhould live civilly together, pray not a word more of that monſtrous filthy thing Marriage, fough!

Mar. Not of Marriage, Siſter? you Jeſt ſure.

Lov. Oh for Shame forbear! Can Fleſh and Blood hear the Word, and keep within Bounds? The very ſound of it leaves ſuch an impreſſion of filthineſs and obſcenity in the Mind, that I have need of all my Morals to ſilence Nature in me: Bleſs me! What refin'd Soul can bear the impure Conſequences of ſo nauſeous a Thing?

Mar. Without much Conjuring; when I reflect on Marriage, all I can ſee in it, is a dear Husband that will love me, pretty Children that will play about me, and a Houſe of my own to manage: and, for my part, I cannot perceive what there is in any of theſe Things offends Decency, or ſhocks good Manners.

Lov. Jeſu! That One born with a Spirit, capable of ſublime and lofty Things, ſhould fooliſhly limit her ſelf to the enjoyment of ſo mean, and ſo deſpicable a Creature as Man!

Mar. Believe me, Siſter, 'tis not prudence in frail Woman to Huff and Hector; for either ſhe yields in time; and then how inſultingly does a Man triumph o'er her conquer'd Pride? Or if, to the laſt, ſhe can boaſt of the venerable Title of Virgin, Does not the ſatirical World ridicule her Wiſdom, and mock her Singularity? Till almoſt choakt with Vapours, and devour'd with Spleen, ſhe makes in Policy a poor ſhift to rail at Men that ſcorn

her; and grudging to the Young the Joys she has out-lived, she pines away with Envy, and dies a fretting Martyr for a reproachful Cause.

Lov. Poor Soul! how deeply is the Spirit in you immersed in the foul Abyss of your Senses. Go on pretty Miss, please your self with fond and airy Notions. But know this, That if there be Fancy in your Choice, there is Judgment in mine. To Philosophy, and not to Man, do I give the Empire of my self; I scorn to yield to common Laws, and to make that Reason a Slave to Mankind, which kind Heav'n imparted free to me.

Mar. This is Heroick indeed: but, pray good Sister, with all your Wit, can you answer me this Question? What sort of Figure had you made in the World, had your wise Progenitours always been wrapt up in lofty Speculations, or musing upon musty Books; had they never condescended to talk familiar Things, and now and then discoursed plain Nature together? Well, since I cannot be a Wit my self, I'll try to bring Wits, and to stock the World with little Doctors, that shall propagate Learning to all Generations.

Lov. I pity you, poor Sister: But pray, since you are so very fond of that Ceremonious Piece of Ruine, let's hear at least, who is the worthy Object of your Inclinations,—— I hope, not *Clerimont*?

Mar. Why not *Clerimont*, pray? Does he want Merit? Is his Estate so mean? or, Is there any Thing in his Person should make one blush at the Choice?

Lov. I do not say there is; but you cannot be ignorant that he is mine already by right of Conquest.

Mar. Lord, Sister, must then so vast, and so sublime a *Genius* as yours, limit it self to the Enjoyment of so mean a Creature as Man!

Lov. Reason, which is my Guide, and not my Tyrant, do's not disapprove of the Courtship of a Man of Vertue; tho' I may hate him for a Husband, yet he may please me well enough, under the Title of an Admirer.

Mar. Passionate Speeches, Fond Addresses, Platonick Gallantry, and such Toys, may feed up the Vanity of a Woman: But, Sister, Are you sure Love has nothing more to desire?

Lov. Thanks to my Wit, I can answer for One; and I should make a sad Example of the daring Mortal, that should attempt to rifle the precious Magazine of my Chastity.

Mar. But after all, What Assurance have you, that *Clerimont* is yours?

Lov. Surely, after a Thousand Declarations of his Love, I think, Sister, I may rely upon his Sincerity in spite of Rivals. [*Enter Clerimont.*

Mar. I do not love to boast; but if you have a mind to try it, here comes one shall decide the Quarrel. Come on *Clerimont*, [*to Cler.*
and without any Fear, or Partiality, disclose your Heart. My Sister challenges your Love, and I flatter my self I have a right to it; let's see in whose Favour you'll declare your self.

Lov. I am not so fond, Sister, of a publick Declaration, as to put any Man I value, to the hard Extremity, either of Dissembling, or Disobliging: the One is as unworthy of a Man of Honour, as the other is against the Rules of fine Breeding.

Cler. No, Madam; my Heart, incapable of Diſſembling, does not ſcruple to own an Engagement which is the Pride and Happineſs of my Life: Fair *Mariana*'s Charms are ſuch as will eaſily juſtifie the greateſt Paſſion in the World.

Lovew. But can thoſe mighty Charms, Sir, be a good Excuſe for Baſeneſs and Infidelity?

Cler. Do me more Juſtice, Madam; and impute to your ſelf the blame of my Inconſtancy: 'Tis that ſtiff and imperious Carriage of yours, that cold Indifferency you affected upon all Occaſions, and your high boaſting of the tyrannical Empire you exercis'd over me, have at laſt open'd my Eyes, and reſtor'd me to the Uſe of my Reaſon; and can you now complain, or——

Lov. I Complain? No Sir, you miſtake me; my Reſentment would make you proud, and fancy that your Heart was a Conqueſt worth my keeping.

Mar. Now, Siſter, here's a Scope for your Philoſophy with a vengeance: ſumm up all your Morals to your Aſſiſtance; let's ſee if you can look upon a happy Rival with a Stoical and Undaunted Mind.

Lov. You triumph, Siſter, in your pretty Looks, and pleaſing Smiles, and think of Inſulting, perhaps too ſoon; feed your eaſie, deluded Soul, with empty Dreams of Pleaſure: Your Happineſs is not ſo great, as to deſerve my Envy.——

——Nor perhaps ſo certain yet, as not to leave me ſome Proſpect of a Change. [*Aſide, and as ſhe is going off.*

[*Exit.*

Cler. However ſhe may endeavour to diſguiſe it, I am ſatisfy'd, ſhe is not a little offended at the Sincerity of my Declaration.

Mar. But I am pleas'd with it; and without the laborious Task of two years Love you have beſtow'd on her in vain, I give you leave to think me not Ungrateful.

Cler. Still as you ſpeak, my Love diſcerns freſh Wonders; and to that free and generous Temper, ſo oppoſite to the little Artifices and Diſſimulation of your Sex, do I reſign all the Liberty your other Charms have left me.

Mar. Miſtake me not, *Clerimont*; I ſet as high a Value upon the Modeſty of our Sex, as the beſt Moraliſts of 'em all; but yet I ſee no reaſon why we ſhould keep a Lover at ſuch a diſtance, when we are once ſatisfy'd of his Worth and Sincerity; ſince all the Incenſe after that exacted, ſerves only to gratifie the two great Idols of our Souls, *Pride* and *Vanity*, and gives no real Satisfaction either to Reaſon or Reputation.

Cler. Nay, proves often a piece of Policy very fatal to the Proud and Scornful of your Sex; for their Vanity forcing thus a pining Lover to ſpend his whole Stock of Love in Courtſhip, the Conſequence of it, is, That he has none left for Marriage.

Enter Lucy *to* Clerimont *and* Mariana.

Lucy, Oh, Madam, I am quite out of breath!

Mar. What's the matter now, *Lucy*?

Lucy, The Matter? only Treaſon, High-Treaſon plotting againſt you two within.

Cler. I dare lay a Wager, your Siſter's Jealouſie has been at work.

Lucy, 'Tis e'en ſo; I never ſaw her Philoſophy ſo ruffl'd before.

Mar. But what was the Reſult of it, *Lucy*? How did her Wiſe, her Witty Mother take it?

Lucy, You know her Way; ſhe has always more Sentences in her Mouth than Teeth.

Cler. But ſtill let's hear a little.

Lucy, With a furious train of her bombaſt Expreſſions, and a flood of Latin, which, for ought I know, was all Swearing or Conjuring, ſhe did juſt now, in her Tone of Authority, pronounce, That *Mariana*, the Undutiful *Mariana*, ſhould have no other Husband but Mr. *Timothy Witleſs*.

Mar. Don't you tremble, *Clerimont*, at the Name of your Rival?

Cler. No Rival, Madam, can ſeem dangerous to me, after your laſt Aſſurance.

Lucy, No; on my Conſcience, you need not fear him.

Cler. But how came you to know that Property, Mrs. *Lucy*?

Lucy, I have ſeen the Coxcomb at *Cambridge*: he was noted there for a mighty Boaſter of pretended Favours; and one could hardly name a Woman to him, but he had had the luck to lie with.

Cler. A Scholar, on my Word.

Lucy, Nay, he courted me once moſt fiercely; but I dreading Matrimony then, a little more than I do now, ſent him packing to his Grammar: Upon this, what does my mere Scholar do, Sir, to be revenged of me, but uſe me juſt as he do's his Books; for as he quotes every day Paſſages out of 'em, which he never read, ſo he boaſts of Favours of mine he never enjoy'd: ne'er truſt me, if I have not a month's Longing, to ſerve him a Trick for his Impudence.

Cler. We'll joyn with you, Mrs. *Lucy*, I promiſe you: But firſt, Is the Man Eaſie? May we venture to play upon him?

Lucy, The Man, Sir, is an exact Tool for our purpoſe; a good harmleſs Booby; ſo very honeſt, that as he carry'd no Wit to *Cambridge*, ſo he has the Conſcience to bring none from thence: a dull, lumpiſh, low-ſpirited Ninny, who is contented to be a Fool by Nature, and wants the Skill of our modiſh Sparks to make himſelf a Fool by Art.

Cler. However, he muſt be removed; for in Matters of Love, a Fool is as troubleſome, as a Witty Man is dangerous.

Lucy, I'll be content to die a Virgin, if I do not accompliſh it for you.

Cler. Look to your ſelf, pretty Mrs. *Lucy*: You could not have bound your ſelf by a greater Curſe.

Lucy, Then judge your ſelves: — My Brother *Trap*, who waits on him at *Cambridge*, in the manifold Qualities of Gentleman, Foot-man, and *Valet de Chambre*, ſent me word laſt Week, That his worthy Maſter was ſoon to ſet out for his Matrimonial Expedition: — He is famous for merry Tricks and Frollicks; and I dare anſwer for his Zeal, or be bound Body for Body, that he'll be true to the Cauſe.

Cler. I

Cler. I desire no better Security.

Mar. This falls out as luckily as we could wish.

Lucy, I'm inform'd that he is expected to day; I'll send for him, as soon as I hear he is come to Town, to Consult with him, and set his Wits at work.

Mar. Then let's ev'ry one to our Tasks immediately: *Clerimont*, my Uncle *Meanwell* is your Friend; you may try his Interest for my Father's Consent.

Cler. Trust, Madam, to my Love for obeying a Command, on which all my Happiness depends; I'll about it presently, only give me leave to wait on you within. [*Exeunt.*

Scene Changes.

The Street.

[*Enter* Witless, *shaking the flaps of his Coat, and making Faces.* —— *With him Three Pick-pockets, and* Trap *with a Portmantua upon his Shoulders*; Witless *standing between two of the Pick-pockets, while the third is amusing* Trap *at one corner of the Stage.*]

Witless, Pox o' the Milk-woman, and my unlucky stumbling on her: she was not Pretty neither: Fough! how she has daub'd me! By the University, my Cloaths have dropt as much of her Stuff, as would suckle ten Parish-Bastards.

1st. *Pick-pocket*, How the buisie, noisie Rabble began presently to swarm about you! 'Twas a great mercy, Sir, we came to your Rescue, they would have pull'd you a' pieces else; for that untractable Crew, set up of late for Arbitrary Avengers of Wrongs, and like greedy Birds of Prey, are always flying to Milchief.

2d. *Pick-p.* I was almost in a Fury, to see a Person of Quality so abus'd.

Witl. Quality! Ay, that I am; and for my Honour let it be spoken, the very First that ever was of my Family.

1st. *Pick-p.* May I crave your Name, Sir?

Witl. My Name, Sir?—My Father is a Knight, and I wou'd have the rascally Mobb to know, that he'll talk *Astrology* with 'em for their Ears: By the University, I'll send a Challenge to the Vermin, and try how much of the Gentleman they have in their Doublets.

2d. *Pick-p.* Challenge the *Mobb*? You Jest sure: The Mobb never fight; they only butcher, or knock one down, without either Method of Fencing, or Rules of Justice.

3d. *Pick-p.* to *Trap.* } I had an itching Mind to have sent half a dozen of those Sons of Whores to their pocky Mothers, to make black Bacon of 'em.

Trap. Faith, I hate Blood-shed, and never was fond of Valour; I had rather live Three Days in this pretty sinning World, than a Thousand in History.

1st. *Pick-p.* I

1ſt. *Pick-p.* I ſuppoſe you come, Sir, to make the Town happy with your Company, for ſome time.

Witl. Truly, Gentlemen, my Buſineſs in Town, is the Buſineſs of any place I live in; Love-Intrigues; nothing elſe: I have of late ſo liberally Cuckolded the whole Body-Politick of *Cambridge*, Mayor, Aldermen, *&c.* that I am forced to come up for the reliſh of Variety.

2d. *Pick-p.* *London* is a large Field for Love; you have been here, I don't queſtion, Sir: Pray, how do you like the City?

Witl. The City, Sir? Faith, I think the City is well enough; but pox on't, there are ſo many Buildings in it, they hinder one from ſeeing it; wou'd they were pull'd down, we might then have a full Proſpect of it.

1ſt. *Pick-p.* I ſee, Sir, ſo honeſt a Look in your Face, that with an humble Apology for my Freedom, I muſt give you a ſeaſonable Caution, and that is, To take heed what Company you keep in Town; and have a vigilant Eye upon any body that comes near you; for this great City was never ſo peſter'd with Pick-pockets, and buſie Rogues, as it is now.

[*All this while the* 2d. *Pick-pockets is ſtealing* Witleſs's *Sword, and rifling his Pockets on one ſide.*

Witl. Say you ſo? Oh, the Villains, let me alone with them; I'll be cunning enough for 'em, I warrant you.

2d. *Pick-p.* But, Sir, what argues Impudence beyond Example? The officious Cheats will intrude themſelves into your Company, upon the ſpecious pretence of Civility: They'll make very free and extravagant Offers to you: But, Oh, the wicked Age we live in! while one of 'em is thus amuſing you with ſome impertinent Story, the other is very buſie in rifling your Pockets.

[*All this while the firſt Pick-pocket is rifling* Witleſs *his other Pockets of a Pack of Cards, a Table-Book, Papers,* &c

Witl. Odd'zookers! give me but a Liſt of the Rogues; my Father is a Juſtice, and I'll ſee 'em hang'd, every Mother's Son of 'em.

1ſt. *Pick-p.* You'll do, Sir, a mighty piece of Service to the Nation: We'll wait on you with a Liſt of their Names, at a more convenient time; till then, your Servant, Sir. [*Exeunt* Pick-pockets.

Witl. Gentlemen, Yours ——

Look to your ſelf, *Trap*, as we walk home; for theſe kind Gentlemen were pleaſed to inform me, the Town is full of Cheats and Rogues: ——— Wou'd I could catch ſome of 'em with their Hands in my Pockets, I'd preſently ſay to my Sword,——Sword! out of the Scabboard. ——O, I am Robb'd! By the Univerſity, Robb'd! —— my Sword: ——— My Purſe! —— Nay, the very Speech for my Miſtreſs, is gone too! I am Undone! I ſhall not be Marry'd this Week! Alack! Alack!

[*Makes as if he was going to draw.* [*Miſſes his Sword.* [*Feels in his Pockets*

Trap feels in his Pockets. } I am ſafe; that's well: Come, Sir, you are gull'd, I ſee; but if the Speech be the worſt of your Loſs, I warrant you there is Learning enough upon my Shoulders to make a new one: Pox o' your Books!

Books! how heavy they are! —— 'tis well for you, you do not load your Memory with 'em: D'Zlife! Cou'd you not, like the reſt of the Scholars, leave your Learning behind you?

Witl. O ſweet, honey *Trap*, I ſhall never have ſo fine a Speech again, there was no leſs than three Acts of Parliament quoted in it.

Trap. But pray now, have you done? Shall we march on? leſt your kind Gentlemen return, and eaſe me of my Burthen.

Witl. Ay, *Trap*; Ay; only this by way of Caution; Be ſure to ſend Word immediately to dear *Lucy*, Not to take any manner of notice of me, when I come to court her Miſtreſs: I'll be for her again, tell her, as ſoon as I have got Mrs. *Meanwell*, that ſweet Bird of Love, into the Cage of Matrimony; till then, *Trap*, no Syllable, pray, of any Night-Adventures.

Trap, Oh, there you are out, Sir; with Submiſſion, I think it your Intereſt, the thing ſhould be known.

Witl. Fie, *Trap*, Fie; 'twould ſpoil my Marriage.

Trap, 'D'Zlife! quite contrary: Believe me, Sir, a Lover is valued by his Miſtreſs, as a Soldier by his General, the better for his Experience.

Witl. But for all your fooling, *Trap*, if Sir *Timothy* ſhould examine you about my Intrigues, don't you be ſuch a Buzzard, as to own, it was upon ſome ill Deſign: Tell him only, That having often heard, that the meeting of two Maiden-heads, begetteth commonly a Fool; I thought it prudence in me, to take care, the Son and Heir of my Family ſhould not be ſo unlike my ſelf.

Trap, Oh! If ſo, then by all means, your future Spouſe ſhould uſe the ſame Caution; for then your Children would be wonderful Wiſe: —— But come, Lead on, pray.

Witl. Oh, my Speech! 'twas a rare one: —— [*Going off.*
Oh, my Sword! 'twas a pure Blade. ——

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE Changes to

Sir *Maurice's Houſe.*

Enter Clerimont *and* Catchat.

Cler. This Mrs. *Catchat* has a great Influence over the Lady *Meanwell*, her Siſter; and if I can make her our Friend, ſhe'll be a good Advocate for us: I'll try —— [*Aſide.*
Suffer, Madam, a paſſionate Lover to make uſe of this Opportunity, to diſcover to you the ſincere —— [*Addreſſes himſelf to* Catchat.

Catch. Hold, Sir, Hold; Not ſo faſt, pray: Don't explain your ſelf too freely yet; there are Rules of Decency to be obſerv'd in every thing;

Cler. That's true, Madam: But my Paſſion is grown to ſuch a heighth, that ——

Catch. I know well enough, Sir, that you love me, ſigh, and dye for me; yet let me tell you, 'tis both prudent, and diſcreet, I ſhould pretend Ignorance, at leaſt for a time.

Cler. Oh, Madam, give me leave but to open my Heart to you, and you'll be ſatisfied, that my ——

Catch. Believe me, *Clerimont*, an eaſie Conqueſt affords but little Glory: You ſhall value my Heart the better, if I make you pull and tugg hard for it.

Cler. But ſtill you miſtake my Meaning, Madam; I'll explain my ſelf better, and make you ſenſible, that what I wiſh ſo impatiently for, is only ——

Catch. What! Would you come to a Concluſion ſo very quick? Fye, *Clerimont*, 'tis againſt the Rules. What had become of the reſt of the Romance, had *Mandana* yielded preſently to *Grand Cyrus*; or, *Clælia* fled into the Arms of *Aronces* at the firſt Intimation of his Love?

Cler. Let not your Heart, Madam, be ſo alarm'd; you have no violence to fear from me: I can aſſure you, *Mariana* is the only Object of my Deſires; and I want nothing to compleat my Happineſs, but Sir *Maurice*'s Conſent, with the Favour of your Aſſiſtance towards it.

Catch. Oh Sir, this Shift I muſt hugg you for; —— 'tis the prettieſt ever came into a witty Man's Head. I admire your Invention; and vow in all the Romances I ever read, I hardly met with any thing more Ingenious, or better contriv'd.

Cler. This is Matter of Fact, Madam, and not of Wit: 'Tis *Mariana* I love, 'tis *Mariana* has the ſole Empire of my Heart, and to obtain her is my higheſt Ambition.

Catch. Ah, good Sir, *D'Autres*, I underſtand, well enough, what it is you mean, under the diſguiſed Name of *Mariana*. Poor Creature! She is but a Pretence I ſee; and indeed, as the caſe ſtands, 'tis well for you, *Clerimont*, you are not in Earneſt with her; for to my knowledge, ſhe is a Manhater.

Cler. Ah, Madam! Why muſt you ſo deceive your ſelf, as not to believe what is Truth, and fancy Things that are not?

Catch. No more Grimaces, as you love me; pull off the Vizard, *Clerimont*, and be not aſham'd to own a Paſſion which your Looks cannot conceal.

Cler. Madam, I proteſt ——

Catch. Nay, proteſt what you will, you ſhall ſigh a little longer: 'Tis not for the Credit, and Reputation of my Charms, to take pity of a Man ſo ſoon; —— [*Looking with a languiſhing Air upon him.*
tho' I confeſs, were I to break a Rule, there is ſo muſt Honeſty in that Phyſiognomy of yours, that I could almoſt be tempted to ——

Cler. Keep to your Rules, Madam, I entreat you; but do not go on in your Errour.

Catch, Adieu *Clerimont*, let this ſuffice for once; I have, I fear, diſcover'd too much Weakneſs already: 'Tis time for my Modeſty to make an honourable Retreat.

Cler. What, go undeceived! and ſtill running on in that Extravagant Humour,—— Madam, I tell you——

Catch. Pray forbear, Sir, and be not ſo preſſing: Surely you don't deſign to offer Violence to my Honour.

Cler. May I periſh, Madam, if I have ſuch a Thought.

Catch. I'll hear no more, *au revoir* ——

Cler. Hang me, Madam, if I love you, your——

Catch. I tell you, Sir, 'tis in vain,— *au revoir* ——

[*Exit.*

Clerimont *Solus.*

Pox of her Fancies: I never met with any thing ſo impertinent in my Life. When a vain Woman is in Love, ſhe muſt, for her own Credit, perſwade her ſelf ſhe is belov'd.

And ſpeaking Truth in Love, we're not believ'd,
All Women like in this, to be deceiv'd.

ACT II.

Enter Sir *Maurice*, and *Meanwell.*

Sir *Maur.* I Am over-joy'd at the News, Brother; for his Father and I, were intimate Friends, and fellow Soldiers under *Monk.* You may aſſure *Clerimont*, that I ſhall be Proud of the Honour of his Alliance ——

But here comes my Siſter; [*Enter* Catchat.
let's hear what ſhe ſays to it.

You come in very good time, Siſter, to give your Opinion about a Match for my Daughter. *Clerimont* is the Man my Brother propoſes: And I am ſo far ſatisfied with his Character, that I give my Conſent to it.

Catch. My Brother *Meanwell* cannot be in Earneſt ſure. I know the thing is impoſſible.

Mean. How now, Siſter, What do you mean by that?

Catch. Nothing Brother, but only that you are impoſed, prettily impoſed upon; that's all. The Gentleman's Heart, to my knowledge, is deeply enga'd ſomewhere elſe.

Mean. You are in a merry Humour, Siſter: What's the meaning of this Fooling? Pray, Is not *Clerimont* in Love with my Niece?

Catch. I have Reaſon to think he is not.

Mean. D'Zlife! I have it from his own Mouth, Siſter.

Catch. [*Laughing.*] Ah, ah, ah, poor Brother! How I pity your Ignorance!

Mean. What-a-Pox! Did not he juſt now deſire me to propoſe the Match to Sir *Maurice*? you doat ſurely——

Catch. Laughing. Ah, ah, ah, this Plot won't take, Brother, you muſt think again.

Sir *Maur.* The Woman is mad with her Laughing. Where's the Jeſt of it pray?

Catch. No Jeſt at all, but very good Earneſt I aſſure you Will you have it? here it is. *Clerimont*'s Love is a Myſtery, revealed, as yet, to none but me: But I'll be ſo kind, perhaps, as to open your Eyes, that you may ſee your Errour.

Mean. Ay do: Since you pretend to know things ſo well, let's hear a little, where it is his Affections are ſo deeply engag'd?

Catch. But tell me firſt, Have you a Curioſity to know it?

Sir *Maur.* Surely, I think it do's concern us all to be better inform'd about it.

Catch. Shall I name the very Perſon?

Mean. Ay, ay, by all means; I'm impatient.

Catch. Well, ſince you deſire it ſo earneſtly, know Brothers, 'tis my ſelf. *Fanning her ſelf, and looking big.*

Sir *Maur.* What you! That's a very good Jeſt in troth. Siſter, Siſter, Do you know no body in Town to put this upon, but your own Brothers? Ha! ha! ha! Sir Maurice, *and* Meanwell, *fall a Laughing.*

Catch. Bleſs me Sirs! What means all this Wonder? You laugh, and ſtare, juſt as if I had ſaid ſomething extraordinary. What do you ſee in me pray, that's ſo very deſpicable? I am, thank God, ſo made, as not to need complain of Nature.

Sir *Maur.* I vow, Brother, we have been under a ſad Miſtake all this while; we never knew before, we had a Beauty in our Family.

Catch. I know, poor Souls, if you don't, who it is can yet kill with a Frown, and Fetter with a Smile.

Mean. I am ſorry, Siſter, the World is blind.

Catch. All the World is not Brother,— *Freeman, Belair, Courtall, Valentin, Beaugard, Dorimant, Belamour,* ſtand, I think, in ſpite of Envy, as ſo many living Trophies to my conquering Charms.

Sir *Maur.* Ha! ha! ha! all theſe love you, Siſter, don't they?

Catch. Love me! yes, I think they do;— and beſides theſe, a great many more, tho' I ſay it. I could once have muſter'd a whole Regiment of 'em; for beſides thoſe, my Scorns have diſpatch'd, the Wars have robb'd me of ſome, and the reſt I have diſcarded.

Mean. But pray once in your Life deal Ingeniouſly with us. Did ever any of theſe Gentlemen tell you, they were really in Love with you?

Catch. None ever durſt take ſo much Freedom with me.

Sir *Maur.* *Freeman*, I hear, gives the worſt Characters of you, and ridicules you in all Companies.

Catch. That's only to diſguiſe his Paſſion, and deceive the World the better.

Mean. But what's the Reaſon we never ſee *Courtall* here?

Catch. 'Tis to ſhew the greateſt Reſpect.

Sir *Maur.* *Valentin*, of late, makes violent Love to *Florimel*.

Catch. The Gentleman was forward, and that's the Penance I impoſe on him for a Month.

Mean. But what if he ſhould fall to it in earneſt, and bid adieu to your conquering Charms?

Catch. I don't fear him, Brother; he values Beauty too much, to forſake me.

Sir *Maur.* *Belamour*, to my knowledge, is Marry'd to *Philinda*.

Catch. 'Twas Deſpair drove him to it.

Mean. *Beaugard*, I hear, keeps a Miſs at *Greenwich*.

Catch. I allow him to acquaint himſelf with Vice, that he may value my Vertue the more.

Sir *Maur.* As for *Dorimant*, there is but little Hopes of him: He was always a deſperate Woman-Hater.

Catch. He was ſo, Brother, before he ſaw me: He is not the firſt Convert my Looks have made.

Mean. And as for *Belair*, you know well enough, Siſter, that he profeſſes himſelf an inveterate Enemy to ſtale Virginities.

Catch. The more Hopes for me then.

Sir *Maur.* O' my Conſcience, Siſter, theſe are all Viſions.

Mean. Nothing but Chimera's of her own.

Catch. Ay, Chimera's! Viſions! Viſions and Chimera's! nothing but Chimera's! Very well; I am glad of the Chimera's; I did not know before, I had Viſions and Chimera's.

[*Exit* Catchat.

Sir *Maur.* O' my Conſcience, Womens Heads, now a-days, are ſo ſtuff'd up with their Traſh of Romances and Poetry, that there is no room left in 'em for Reaſon, or Common Senſe: Our Siſter is Mad; ſtark Mad, Brother.

Mean. She has got the Trick of Old Maids, poor Creature; ſhe builds Imaginary Trophies of Love upon the Ruins of her Beauty; and ſets as good a Face as ſhe can upon her Sorrows, whil'ſt inwardly ſhe is a continual Prey to uneaſie Thoughts, and conſuming Deſires; to knawing Deſpair, and tearing Remorſe: I pity her with all my heart. ——— But to return; I have engag'd to give *Clerimont* an Anſwer: Shall he have *Mariana*, or ſhall he not?

Sir *Maur.* Why do you ask again, Brother? I have conſented to it already.

Mean. Then let's in, and joyn your Lady's Conſent to yours.

Sir *Maur.* What need of that, pray? Have I not paſs'd my Word to you?

Mean. That's true, Brother; but ſtill 'twou'd not be amiſs, I think, before I deliver my Meſſage, I were ſure of her Approbation too; for you know, ſhe is ſo———

Sir *Maur.* 'Tis needleſs, I tell you; I'll anſwer for my Wife, and take the thing upon my ſelf: Go you, and acquaint *Clerimont*, that he has my free Conſent, while I diſcourſe with *Mariana*, who comes out ſeaſonably for that purpoſe

[*Exit* Meanwell.

Enter Mariana *and* Lucy *to Sir* Maurice.

Sir *Maur.* Come hither, Child, I have pretty News to tell you: Do you know one *Clerimont*?

Mar. I have heard of him, Sir.

Sir *Maur.* What Character has he?

Mar. The World allows him to be a Man of Wit and Honour.

Sir *Maur.* I am glad your Account agrees with mine; for I have some Thoughts of making him my Son-in-Law.

Mar. Oh, ravishing News! Pardon me, dear Sir, if I have done ill, in concealing from you till now, that this same *Clerimont* you named, has already shewn some Inclination for me; the return of which, I am glad to find, is by your Consent approved of.

Sir *Maur.* You mistake me, Child; 'tis for your Sister *Lovewit*, and not for you, I have given my Word.

Mar. Oh, Heavens! what is't I hear? [*She starts.*

Sir *Maur.* Is there any thing in this, seems so surprising to you, Child?

Mar. Is it possible *Clerimont* should be so Unfaithful? [*Aside.*

Sir *Maur.* What means this great Concern?

Mar. Support me, *Lucy*; I shall Faint.

Sir *Maur.* Come, Child, be not so concern'd; this was only to try you, and see if your Love to *Clerimont* is as great as the Esteem I have for him: He has my Consent to make his Addresses to you; use him you as a Lover.

Mar. I receive the Blessing on my Knees; and thank Heav'n, my Duty and Love are reconciled. [*She Kneels.*

Sir *Maur.* I understand my Wife designs you for young Mr. *Witless*; but he'll come too late I assure him: however, I must receive him civilly, and amuse him for a while, the better to secure our Project

Mar. Her Ladyship, I'm afraid, will make use of all her Power and Rhetorick to oppose my Wishes.

Sir *Maur.* I'd fain see that.

Lucy. Ay, well said, Sir: Don't let her great Words frighten you?

Sir *Maur.* A pretty thing, indeed! a Husband should mind what a Wife says.

Enter Lovewit,— [*who speaks aside*:

Sir *Timothy Witless*, and his lubberly Son, are just come in; and I made haste before 'em, to observe how my Rival receives the first Complements of her new Lover.

Enter

Enter Sir Timothy Witleſs, *and* Witleſs.

Sir *Tim.* Sir *Maurice*, this is my Son *Tim.* of whom Fame has told you ſo much already.

Sir *Maur.* Mr. *Witleſs*, your Servant; I can hardly Expreſs how glad I am to ſee you.

Sir *Tim.* Now *Tim.* for your Complements.

Witl. Is it not expedient, Sir, I ſhould begin with the Father?

Sir *Tim.* Ay, Ay; by all means.

[Witleſs *ſpeaking like a School-Boy, and acting with his Hands, addreſſes himſelf to Sir* Maurice,]

Sir, I come to ſalute, acknowledge, cheriſh and reverence in you a ſecond Father; but a ſecond Father to whom I am more indebted than to my firſt; the firſt Begot me, but you Chuſe me; I was his by Neceſſity, but you accept me by Favour: what I received from him, was but the mere Operation of the Body; but what I have from you, is the free Emanation of the the Will; and by how much more the noble Faculties of the Mind exceed the common Endowments of the Body, by ſo much more alſo do I value that honourable Alliance, for which I am now come to pay you my profound and reſpectful Homage.

Lucy, Nothing like a College, Madam, for Wit. [*To Mariana.*

Witl. Have I performed well, Sir? [*To Sir* Timothy.

Sir *Tim.* To a Miracle, *Tim.* —Now for the Ladies.

Witl. Muſt I Kiſs?

Sir *Tim.* Ay, Ay, Boy; they expect it.

[Witleſs *goes up to* Lovewit, *whom he miſtakes for the Mother, ſalutes her, and then ſpeaks to her:*

Madam, your Right of Maternity ——

Sir *Tim.* Odds'bodikins, *Tim.* you are out; —— that is not the Mother.

Witl. Where is ſhe then? — 'Tis none of my fault, ſure?

Sir *Maur.* My Wife will be here preſently, Mr. *Witleſs.*

Witl. Shall I ſtay, Father, till ſhe comes to receive my Speech?

Sir *Tim.* You may in the mean time harangue your Miſtreſs.

Lovew. There ſtands a Lady, Sir, waits impatiently for your Compliment. [*Speaks ſcornfully.*

[Witleſs *puts his Speech into his Hat, and ſometimes looks on* Mariana, *ſometimes on the Speech; and ſays,*

Madam, As the Statue of *Memnon* gave an harmonious Sound, when the Rays of the Sun reflected on it; in a like manner do I find my ſelf animated with a raviſhing Tranſport, at the glorious Appearance of the Sun-ſhine of your Beauty: —— Give me leave then, Madam, to lay at the Altar of your Charms, the Offering of that Heart, ambitious only of the Honour of being,

being, Madam, your moſt loving and devoted Servant and Husband, *Timothy Witleſs*, of *Clare-Hall*.

Lucy, Hey-day! Who would grudge Studying hard, to ſay ſuch fine things. [*Aſide.*

Sir *Maur.* Well, Mr. *Witleſs*, What do you think of my Daughter? Is ſhe not a pretty Book for you to turn over?

Witl. the Lady is a Beauty in *Folio*.

Enter Lady Meanwell.

Sir *Maur.* Dear, this is Mr. *Witleſs* I preſent to you.

Witleſs to the Lady *M.* Madam your Right of Maternity.——

Lady *M.* Sir, I am glad my auſpicious Stars, have, by their benign Influence, directed my Steps to this place,—— that I might——

Witl. Madam, your Right of Maternity,—— your Right of Maternity—— becauſe of her Portion,—— Pretty Sons, and Daughters, I like her very well.—— Humph,—— Madam, you have interrupted me in the middle of my Period, and that has confounded my Memory.

Lady *M.* 'Tis very well, Sir. Daughter, this is [*Preſents* Witleſs *to* Mar. the individual Gentlemen, Fate has decreed, and I pronounce, your Husband.

Sir *Maur.* What! dear Duck! before Sir *Timothy*, and I have examined into Matters?

Lady *M.* Duck! fough! What a ruſtick and mean Expreſſion is there?

Sir *Maur.* Well, then my walking Univerſity, my puzling Library of Fleſh, give me leave to tell you, things of this Nature deſerves ſome conſideration.

Lady *M.* That's good indeed with People that need ſecond Thoughts: But where quick Imagination, and profound Judgment meet, the firſt do as well. I have reſolv'd it ſhall be ſo; no more words pray: I expect your compliance.

Sir *Maur.* But, Why muſt we precipitate things in this manner? Why not give 'em time to know one another? Are you ſure their Inclinations will agree?

Lady *M.* Marriage may breed Love; they muſt try.

Sir *Maur.* On my word, Lady, if Marriage has that Effect with them, they'll have better Luck than I.

Witl. to *Mar.* For my part, Madam, I'm ready.

Sir. *Tim.* Spoke like a Man, *Tim.* [Sir Maur. *claps him on the Shoulder.*

Mar. And for my part, Sir, I am not: I muſt freely own to you, that your Merit has not yet made an Impreſſion deep enough in me.

Witl. There is ſuch a Sympathy of Features in our Two Faces, that my Heart tells me, we were made one for another.

Mar. Marriage is ſo laſting a Bondage, that ſurely it ſhould be beneath the Character of a Man of Honour, to wiſh under it a Perſon he Loves.

Witl. Nego

Wittl. *Nego Conſequentiam*, Madam, I may be Man of Honour, and yet conſent to receive you of the Hands of your Parents.

Mar. A Woman's Heart proves commonly a Rebel, which was taken from her by Violence.

Sir *Tim.*] *Tim. Tim.* fair Means are beſt.

Wittl. We read in the Ancients, Madam, that there was a laudable Cuſtom amongſt 'em, to raviſh Daughters out of their Father's Houſes, to the end it ſhould not appear, that they had, of their own accord, fled into the Arms of a Man.

Mar. The Ancients, Sir, are dead, and we live; we can ſave our Modeſty without their Cuſtoms: And when a Match is offer'd, we know how to expreſs our Liking to it, without offending againſt the Rules of Decency. Give me, Sir, but a little time: If you love me, as you pretend, you muſt have no other Will but mine.

Wittl. Yes, Madam, to the Intereſt of my Love Excluſively.

Mar. But ſure the greateſt Inſtance of Love, in a Complaiſant Lover, is to ſubmit, without reſerve, to the Pleaſure of his Miſtreſs.

Wittl. *Diſtinguo*, Madam; where the poſſeſſion of her Perſon is not concern'd, *Concedo*; but where it is, *Nego*——

Mar. Well, Sir, ſince you want Complaiſance to allow me time to conſider, I'll not want Prudence to take it my ſelf. I am not for Marrying in ſuch haſt, nor before my Father has declared his Mind, Sir.

Lovew. } My Siſter you ſee, Madam, had rather rely upon her Fancy, than
to the Lady. } truſt to better Eyes for a Choice.

Mar. Siſter, if my Father will not give me the Man I Love, I ſhall beg of him, at leaſt, not to force me to Marry one I hate.

[*Exit* Mariana.

Lady *M.* } Your Daughter, Sir *Maurice*, grows every Day ſo Giddy,
to Sir *Maur.* } and ſo exorbitantly Rude, that no polite Soul can bear with her Effrontery: but I'll take her to Task, and teach her a *Se connôitre.*——

Enter Catchat, *follow'd by Sir* Maggot Jingle.

Catch. Make room, make room for the Virgil of our Age.

Lovew. What! my old Lover, Sir *Maggot Jingle*, I am in an Extaſie for Joy.

Sir *Maur.* Pox of their *Jingle*, and his ſcandalous Title: Muſt that ſtarving paraſitical Knight be always rhiming and bawling at my Table. Curſe on him! One may know by his Viſits, better than by the Clock, when 'tis Dinner-time at my Houſe.—— Sir *Timothy*, I think you and I have nothing to do here. Had not we beſt go in, and take a Pipe in my little Room?

Sir *Tim.* With all my Heart, Sir *Maurice*.

Sir *Maur.* The Ladies will take care of Mr. *Witleſs*.

[*Exeunt Sir* Maur. *and Sir* Tim.

Lady *M.*

Lady *Maur.* Mr. *Witleſs*, let me have the Honour of preſenting you to this Darling of the Muſes, this younger Brother of *Apollo*, Sir *Maggot Jingle.*

Wittl. What, Madam, the Famous Sir *Maggot Jingle* that writ that Incomparable Poem of the Fox?

Lady *M.* The very ſame, Sir.

Wittleſs. Oh Sir! for the ſake of the Fox, let me embrace you, as long as there are Men that love to hunt after Wit and Fancy; your Fox will be ſure to be run to Poſterity. [*Embraces Sir* Maggot Jing.

Sir *M. Jingle*, Sir your moſt Humble: I do not love to commend my ſelf; but I take that Piece to be a *Non ultra* in the kind.

Witleſs. What pity 'tis, Sir, the Court does not underſtand your Merit.

Sir *M. Jing.* I am now favouring the ungrateful World, with a rare Collection of my Songs; for without Vanity let it be ſpoken, I am the beſt Lyrick Poet in *England.*

Catch. How Wittily his Muſe expreſſes her ſelf.

Lady *Maur.* I'm now in my Element ——*Nimble* bring Chairs.—— There lies a Booby now, for want of underſtanding the *Æquilibrium* of Things. [Nimble *brings a Chair, and falls with it.*

Nimble. And ſo this, I ſaw it, as ſoon as I was down.

Sir *M. Jing.* *'Tis well for you, Son of an Aſs,*
Nature did not make you of Glaſs.

Lovew. What! an impromptu with ſo much Wit! Wonderful!

Catch. Surely this Man is the Phœnix of Poetry.

[*Chairs are brought, all ſit.*

Sir *M. Jing.* Well Ladies, Is the Day fix'd for the opening of your Academy of *Beaux Eſprits.*

Lady *Maur.* *Tueſday* is the Day, Sir *Maggot.*

Sir *M. Jing.* Woe then to the Royal Society; the Glory of it will ſuffer a manifeſt Eclipſe.

Catch. Nay, Sir *Maggot*, we will not be ſo Cruel neither to thoſe Gentlemen as to refuſe to join to our Learned Body, the moſt able Mathematicians amongſt 'em; to the end, that by a free Communication of our Diſcoveries, we may penetrate together into ſuch dark Secrets of Nature, as have hitherto been deem'd unfathomable by humane Capacity.

Lady *Maur.* Our Society ſhall be as the Inquiſition, a Tribunal without Appeal, or Mercy; where, with a Sovereign Authority, we ſhall Judge of all Books that come out: No Authors ſhall write well, but thoſe we approve of; and no body pretend to Wit, but we, and our Friends.

Lovew. But you, Sir *Maggot*, has your witty Muſe conceiv'd of late: What News pray rom *Apollo*'s Levee?

Sir *M. Jing.* Very little, Madam, that deſerves to be named to ſuch Sapphos of our Age, as I ſee here.

Lovew. Come Sir *Maggot*, no Compliments: You know we had rather hear fine things, than our ſelves commmended.

Sir *M. Fing.* This is another impromptu, Ladies only made at leisure. [*Pulling out a Paper.*

Catch. Oh! I shall fall into a Swoon.——

Sir *M. Fingle.* Hum, Hum, Hum.——

To the Countess of *Squeezingham*, upon her AGUE.

Your Prudence surely, is asleep,
——Whilst you magnificently treat
And in your rich Apartment keep
Your cruel Enemy in state.

Lady *M.* Oh the *Fustee* Beginning!

Catch. What a gallant Turn is there!

Lovew. Nothing can be more *degage*.

Sir *M. Fing.*

Ah force it out, say what they will,
From your Apartment, rich and rare;
Th'Ungrateful thus attempts to kill,
And rob you of a Life so fair.

Lady *M.* Oh give me leave to breath,

Lovew. I am all Rapture, I vow.——

Catch. Bless me! what a pretty Metaphor that rich Apartment is.

Lady *M.* The Parenthesis, in my mind, is worth a Million.—— *Force it out, say what they will,* it implies a Challenge, a Defiance to Criticks.

Lovew. I'd freely give my Portion to be the Author of a Thing, so much out of the common Road.

Sir *M. Fing.* What follows, Ladies, will not disgrace the beginning I'm sure.

What! thus regardless of your Race,
In your high Blood it self to place!
And Night and Day torment you so.

Though it has all this Favour found,
Oh, yet at length some Anger show;
And when next to the Bath *you go,*
With your own Hands let it be drown'd.

Lady *M.* I can hold no longer.

Catch. I die, away! Support me! Oh, Support me, some body! Alas! Alas!

Lovew. I'm lost in Pleasure!

Lady *M.* Though it has all this Favour found; though you have indulg'd it, humour'd it so long——

Lovew. Oh, yet at length some Anger shew; some Passion, some Indignation, some Resentment for its Ingratitude.

Catch. With your own Hands let it be drown'd —— That is, Take hold of it, Madam, and plunge it into the Water——Oh! Oh! ——

Lady *M.* VVell, Mr. *Witless*, did you ever hear the like? VVhat do you think now the Author of so excellent a Piece deserves?

Witl. VVhat he deserves, Madam?—— He deserves to be Hang'd.

Sir *M. Jing.* What, Sir, do you know him? [*In a Passion.*

Witl. Not I, Sir, by *Jupiter Ammon*; but I warrant him, a most illiterate Ass; a mere Rhiming Ideot, without the least Tincture of Philosophy in him.

Lovew. You are too severe, Mr. *Witless*; the Author is a Man noted for Wit among us.

Witl. That's all one to me; I maintain him Guilty of High-Treason against *Aristotle*: VVho in the Devil's Name, ever heard of an Ague being a Tangible Body, and subject to Drowning?

Sir *M. Jing.* I am confident, Sir, no Man can write better Verses than these; and my reason for it, is, because I am my self the Authour of 'em.

Witl. VVhat you, Sir?

Sir *M. Jing.* Yes, Sir; my self in Person.

Witl. The more shame for you, Sir.—— Look you Ladies, I'll make you a Copy of Verses upon any Subject you'll name, only to let you see the difference between a Poet and a Scholar.

Sir *M. Jing.* Then write a Madrigal upon a Box o' the Ear.

[*Gives him a Box o'th' Ear.*

Witl. Meaning me, Sir? —— [*after a little musing,*] —— ——And so I will ——

Sir Maggotty Jingle
Did make my Ear tingle;
Which was to me an Affront:
But strait for his Box
I wish'd him the Pox;
So had the better on't.

Sir *M. Jing.* Ha! Ha! Ha! [*Laughs.*

Witl. VVhat? do you Laugh? you Chimney-Sweeper of *Parnassus*! —— Tho' I take a Box o'th' Ear; I have too much Honour to put up a Jeer: By the

the Scull of *Chaucer*, I'll Rhime thee Black and Blue. —— Come if you dare! you Poet Laureat of *Bedlam*.

[Witleſs *lays his Sword aſide, and offers to Box with Sir* M. Jingle.

Lady *M.* In the Name of *Apollo*, I charge you to keep the Peace.

Witl. Thank the Lady, Muſhroom, that you live. —— And now Ladies, to convince you, that a ſneaking Rhiming Knight, is but an Owl to a Scholar, Here, Here's a piece of Work, for One that has been at *Cambridge* but Fours Years and Three-quarters. [Witleſs *offers a roll'd Sheet of large Paper to Lady* M.

Sir *M. Jing.* If you pleaſe, Madam, I'll ſave your Ladyſhip the trouble of Reading. *Sir* M. *takes the Paper.*

[*Sir Maggot Jingle* reads——

And Exact and Accurate MAP, containing the moſt Curious and moſt Remarkable Signs upon the Road between *Cambridge* and *London*, with their ſeveral Motto's, Inſcriptions and Devices, as they were faithfully taken and delineated by *Timothy Witleſs*, Batchelor of Arts, in his late Travels.

Sir *M. Jing.* By *Apollo*, the thing is new and ſingular—Hah! Hah! Hah! [*Ladies look on the Paper.*

Witl. You may look, Ladies, and wonder: I can ſay, that for my ſelf, there is a thing now, Sir *Francis Drake* never thought of in all his Travels at Sea.

Lovew. For my part, I am charm'd with the curious Drawing.

Witl. And well you may, Lady: for to tell you the truth, I have, in all my Fancies, a huge ſtroke of the Antients: —— Look you; All theſe fine Proſpects you ſee here, I have copied from a famous Landskip, drawn, to the beſt of my Memory, five Years before the Flood.

Sir *M. Jing.* Pray, Sir, do you know what Country-man the Painter was. [*In a jeering Tone.*

Witl. A Foreigner, to be ſure, by his way of Drawing: I think he was Painter in Ordinary to the King of *Venice*; his Name begins with an (*&c.*) but truly, I have forgot it now.

Nimble, Madam — Dinner is upon the Table.

Lady M. Mr. *Witleſs*, you'll do us the favour to go in.

Lovew. Sir *Maggot*, for the ſake of the Ague, be you my Gueſt to day.

Sir *M. Jing.* Agreed: ——

A hearty Meal muſt make our Works compleat;
A Poet lives to Write, and Writes to Eat.

ACT III.

Enter Lucy *and* Trap.

Trap. HIS Steward's Place, sayest thou? Faith, no News in the World could have been more welcome; for besides that I have a natural Inclination to Mischief, Sir *Timothy* was pleas'd, just now, to give me warning to be gone to morrow, only for being at my arrival a little too familiar with that habitual Sin of his, Mrs *Heart-ease*, his House-keeper, and I was almost mad for an opportunity to be revenged of him.

[*Enter* Clerimont.]

Lucy, Hold, *Jack*, Hold; here comes the Gentleman; make your best Honours to your best Master. ——— [*Presents* Trap *to Cler.*
This Creature you see here, Sir, is that worthy Brother of mine, whose Skill and Zeal to do you Service, I have already commended to you.

Cler. He does not look as if he were a Man of Scruples: I dare answer by his Physiognomy, That his Conscience can dispense with a little Roguery to do a Man a Kindness: But has he the heart to serve his Master's Rival?

Trap, For a Master, Sir, give me leave to own none but you: And as to Conscience, I am as modish as the *Vicar* of *Brey*; and seldom listen to it, when there's Preferment in the case.

Cler. Then let's to Action immediately: What can you think of now, to give me a taste of your Wit.

Trap, For my Probation Trick, I have a Plot in hand, will strangely confound and perplex the *Witlesses*: but I must not forestall you with an Account of my Projects; only by way of *Prologue* to our *Comedy*, if you have a mind to make your self Sport, and serve your Love at the same time, I can put you in a way.

Cler. With all my heart: —— Let's hear what you propose?

Trap, Mr. *Witless* has order'd me to find out a Dancing-Master for him: Let me but introduce you in that Quality, and you'll have a good Opportunity to remove his Affections from your Mistress: the Man is as Easie as you can to wish; put any thing upon him, I'll answer, 'twill take.

Cler. I long to be acting of that part; for I was impatient to see the Figure of the Man.

Lucy, Then march about instantly; for behold the Enemy appears.

Cler. Adieu, pretty Mrs. *Lucy*: Remember me a thousand times to Charming *Mariana*. ——— You *Matchiavel*, away to Consultation. [*To* Trap.

[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter

[*Enter* Catchat *and* VVitleſs.]

Cat ch. I ſay, Mr. *Witleſs*, that Milk-Sop Babe, my Niece, ſhall not have ou; upon my VVord, ſhe ſhall not.

Witl. She uſed me ſcurvily, that's the truth on't.

Catch. She does not deſerve a Man of VVit.

Witl. No more ſhe don't, Faith.

Catch. I am really ſo ſhagreen, Sir, to ſee a pretty Gentleman abuſed in my Brother's Houſe, that to ſave the Credit of his Family, I am thinking of ſomething to make you amends for his Daughter's Rudeneſs.

Witl. You are exceeding Bounteous, Mrs *Catchat*.

Catch. Look upon me, Mr. *Witleſs*, and tell me freely, Cou'd you love a VVoman that has liv'd juſt long enough to be VViſe, and make a good Choice?

Witl. 'Tis ſuch a one I long for, I proteſt.

Catch. A Beautiful, Charming Creature.

Witl. Faith, you make my Mouth water.

Catch. A VVit, a Critick, an Authour?

Witl. Odd'zookers! But where ſhall we find ſuch a Treaſure?

Catch. Such a Treaſure is above the Merit and Ambition of Crowned Heads; and yet at your Service, Mr. *Witleſs*.

Witl. Oh, you raviſh me, Madam! I'm tranſported! Let me ſee that Angel! that Goddeſs! I muſt adore her! VVhere is ſhe? VVhere is ſhe, pray?

Catch. Not far, Mr. *Witleſs*: —— Here ſhe ſtands.

Witl VVhere, Madam? VVhere? [*Turns round.*

Catch. Turn this way, Mr. *Witleſs*, and fix your Eyes upon me; —— 'tis my ſelf.

Witl. VVhat! You, Mrs. *Catchat*! —— And is that Face you have on now, all the Faces you have in the VVorld, pray?

Catch. No doubt on, Sir: And ſurely, whoever has ſuch a One, need not deſire a better.

Witl. Faith, Madam, to be plain then, that Face of yours is a very unmannerly Face, to give the Lye to ſo fair a Deſcription.

Catch. I cannot be angry with One I'm ſure loves me: —— Beſides, I muſt tell you, Mr. *Witleſs*, (though indeed there is little need of any other Charm but my Perſon,) I am a Fortune, Sir; —— I have Thouſands, Thouſands, Sir.

VVitl. Oddzniggs, Madam, you ſhould have mention'd that firſt of all.

Catch. The Mortal I ſhall bleſs with the poſſeſſion of my Perſonal Goods, extrinſick, or intrinſick, ſhall have 4000*l.* down, and a 1000*l.* when I am firſt delivered of a Child.

Witl. With

Wittl. With Submiſſion, that's ill ordered, Mrs. *Catchat*, it ſhould be a 1000 *l.* down, and 4000 *l.* at the fall of the Firſt-Fruit; becauſe the Temptation of the Money, is all the Provocation a Husband is like to have with you, to ſtrive for an Heir.

Catch. aſide. Bleſs me! the Fellow is a Fool, a perfect Stranger to Wit, and Beauty: I muſt ſtick to my *Clerimont*; he is a Man of Judgment.

Enter Sir Maggot Jingle, *Lady* Meanwell, *and Mrs.* Lovewitt.

Lovew. Come, Sir *Maggot*, we will not be put off with a Complement; we'll have the Song.

Sir *M. Jing.* To tell you the Truth, I am a little proud of this Piece; look upon it as a very lucky Hitt of my Muſe towards Preferment.——— Here it is.———

SONG.

SHould King Lewis, *with all his might,*
Thus ſay to me, by chance,
Reſign thy Peggy *for one Night,*
And I'll make thee a Peer of France.
To the Monſieur, I'd reply,
As I love a Chriſtmas-*Pye,*
Her Fleſh thy Royal Paw ſhan't handle.
Keep thy Honour and thy Pelf,
And I'll keep Peggy *to my ſelf,*
Who ſhines as bright as any Candle.

Lovew. Next time Sir *Maggot* favours us with a Viſit, I hope our Meetings will be regularly fixed.

Catch. Do you know, Sir *Maggot*, that I diſcovered laſt Week, Three Men in the Moon, fighting a Duel in a Church-yard?

Sir *M. Jing.* Ay, that I know; and I hear ſince, that he in the Blue Coat was wounded, and drop'd down into a Tub of Yeaſt, at a Brewer's in *Bury*.

Catch. I ſaw the poor Creature fall; and I could not but admire at the other Two, who, inſtead of running away, and making their Eſcape, fell a gazing on me for an Hour together. The Sparks of that ſhining World, are of a loving Conſtitution, I promiſe you; a few Looks of mine would ſoon conſume 'em all; and then my Charms, like *Alexander*, muſt weep for want of Worlds to Conquer.

Sir *M. Jing*

Sir *M. Fing.* I cannot boast of prodigious things, Madam: However, I have now a small piece in the Press, will, I hope, appear new to the World; and that's *Cook* upon *Littleton* turn'd into Heroick Verse.

Wittl. Now you talk of Projects, Do you know, Ladies, that my Tutor and I, are setting up a Penny-Post to the *West-Indies*.

Sir *M. Fing.* But you, Mrs. *Catchat*, what's become pray of your dainty Piece of Work as you call it?

Catch. What! my Satyr against Eunuchs? Fough! I left it unfinish'd; the filthy Subject provoked my Spleen, but could not raise my Fancy.

Lady *M.* For my part, I love any thing that has a relish of the publick Spirit in it: I was yesterday with my Lord Mayor, to communicate to him a Mathematical Engin of my own, to keep the Streets as clean, and as dry as a drawing Room all the Year round.

Wittl. How's this, Madam, pray?

Lady *M.* 'Tis only by securing the City from Rain.

Wittl. From Rain, Madam! that's impossible. How can you compass it?

Lady *M.* Oh easily enough, Mr. *Wittless*: Tell me, Have you seen the glaring Lamps upon the Road to *Kensington*?

Wittl. Yes, Madam, that I have. What then?

Lady *M.* Well, just so, 'tis only setting up Timber Posts round about the City, and then fixing a pair of Bellows upon every one of 'em, to blow the Clouds away.

Lovew. Sir *Maggot*, I have now a huge Limbeck making; guess for what.

Sir *M. Fing.* Guess say you? — Faith I can't, unless it be to dissolve the Philosophers Stone.

Lovew. No, no, Sir *Maggot*; 'tis for a more noble Design, I assure you: You must understand, that I have made an exact Collection of all the Plays that ever came out, which I design to put into my Limbeck; and then extract all the Quintessence of Wit that is in them, to sell it by drops to the Poets of this Age.

Sir *M. Fing.* Oh Madam, Let me bespeak a few of your witty Drops for the Poor Gentlemen of the *Athenian Mercury*.

Lovew. Surely those Oracles of Learning do not want 'em.

Wittl. Faith but they do: Look you, I proposed but this to them t'other Day: Suppose we should put the Brains of a Scholar into the Head of a Bull, whether or no that Bull would speak Latin as I do? and never trust me if they knew what to say to it.

Catch. But why should you think that so mighty a Miracle. I my self who seldom boast of any thing, am now teaching a Flea to sing: The little Creature understands the Notes already; and if I live, she shall sing a Song in the next *Opera* that's acted.——

Enter

Enter Sir Timothy Wittless, *reeling; and Sir* Maurice Meanwell, *a little elevated.*

Sir *Maur.* You might have taken another Bottle sure; Why in such hast Sir *Timothy?*

Sir Tem. Look you, Neighbour, when I have Business of Importance in my Noddle, I love to be Sober: Where is luptest *Tim?* Come my Boy, you must be married to morrow; along along to my Taylour, by the Beard of King *Dick*, I'll make thee as gay as a Pageant at my Lord Mayor's Show. Ladies your Servant; Sir *Maurice* your most Humble. On, on Boy.

[*Exit Sir* Timothy.

Wittl. I go, Ladies, and remain your most obsequious Slave. My future Progenitor in Law, I rest for ever your dutiful Son, that is to be. [*taking his leave.*

[*Exit* Wittless.

Sir *M. Fing.* I must take my leave too, Ladies; for some *Vertuosi* are to wait on me this Afternoon, about a Scheme I am preparing for the House, to have all the Cities, Towns, and Villages of *England*, turn'd into Sea-Ports.

Lady *M.* Then Sir *Maggot* your Servant; but pray remember your Promise, and fail not at the New Play to morrow; for the Author came Yesterday to pay his *devoirs* to us, and we have engag'd for our selves, and our Friends, to find it a good one, in spite of Rules, and Criticks.

Sir *M. Fing.* But tell me first, Madam, is the Poet a modest, civil Poet; or is he like one of those, that cannot be Witty without being Obscene.

Lady *M.* What makes you ask Sir *Maggot?*

Sir *M. Fing.* 'Tis only for the pleasure of obliging some nice Ladies of my Acquaintance, who will be sure never to miss the first Acting of a Play, that if there be any thing high season'd in it, they may please their Palates, and tickle their Fancies with it; and then with a turning up of the Nose, and a Jesu had I known the Play was so filthy, I would not have seen it for a Million: They'll be sure, for their own Reputation, to cry, the Poet's down; and declaim high against those who shew so little Modesty, as to see it the second Day.

Lady *M.* I know the Author, Sir *Maggot*, and dare engage for the Chastity of his Muse.

Sir *M. Fing.* 'Tis enough, Ladies, that the Poet is under your Protection; I'll be at his Play I warrant you, and clap stoutly as soon as the Candles begin to light.

[*Exit*

Sir Maur. I thought, *Witt Paramount*, I must have been forced to dismiss my self without Audience.

Lady M. What! Angry? Sir *Maurice*; I thought you stood all the while admiring the Famous Sir *Maggot Jingle.*

Sir Maur. Hang him for a scurvy Pimp of Wit, that could never Match Rhime, and Sense together, a Scoundrel of *Parnassus*, and the very scandal of his Trade.

Lovew. His Trade! Fough, how Citizen-like is that Expression!

Sir Maur. A dull Gossiping, Rhiming Parasite, who Robs the *Piazzas* of Paper to Write his Madrigals upon, and stands Recorded in Ale-Houses, for the inspiring Liquor that makes him a Wit.

Catch. Brother, Brother talk with more Reverence of Sir *Maggot Jingle*, pray, what if his Loyalty to *Oliver* has made him Poor, he is still a Knight, and a Poet, and such as he, you know, can Fight, and Lampoon.

Sir Maur. Faith, Sister, I fear neither his Sword nor his Satyr, as long as I keep a good Table; for such as he I know, had rather put up an Affront than lose a Meal.

Lady M. How now, Sir *Maurice*, is the merry God Dancing a Jigg within the inclosure of your Brains? you forget your self strangely methinks.

Sir Maur. 'Tis to you, Sister, I speak, what a Devil have you to do with Jingling and Poetry. [*To Catchat.*

Catch. Lord, Sister, what a strange compound your Husband is of Vulgar and Clowniſh Atoms?

Sir Maur. A pretty thing indeed, to see those long Spectacles of yours, set on the Top of my House, for you to peep, and tell how many Hackney Coaches are going in the Moon.

Lovew. Oh the Illiterate Brute! thus to affront a Telescope. [*aside*

Sir Maur. I am no Scholar, not I, and I thank my Stars for it, but with your leave, so much common Sense has taught me, that all the Study and Philosophy of a Wife, should be to please her Husband, instruct her Children, have a Vigilant Eye over Domestick Affairs, keep a good Order in her Family, and stand as a Living Pattern of Virtue, and Discretion to all about her.

Lady M. Sir *Maurice* like another *Solon*, is now setting up for a Law-giver, Poor Soul!

Sir Maur. The Women of Old did not read so much, but lived better, Housewifry was all the Knowledge they aspired to; now adays Wives must Write forsooth, and pretend to Wit with a Pox.

Catch. 'Tis the partial', and foolish Opinion of Men Brother, and not our Fault has made it ridiculous now adays; for a Woman to pretend to Wit, she was born to it, and can shew it well enough, when occasion serves.

Sir Maur. Ay, to our Cost sometimes, Female Wit Triumphs, and Excels in three things, Revenge, Dissembling and Cuckoldom; there I grant we must yield to you for quickness and dexterity.

Catch. But for all your Jesting Brother, a Man's Wit is as dull as his Appetite, if not set an Edge by ours.

Sir Maur. Hang your Edging, a Woman's Wit was always a Pimp to her Pleaſures.

Lady M. I'm tired *Sir Maurice* with your Nonſenſe: Satyr does not become a Citizen.

Sir Maur. But I tell you Lady, that I will have a Reformation in my Houſe, that this Plague of Wit has infected all my Servants, even my little Boy, forſooth, cannot turn the Spit now without a *Pharamond*, or a *Caſſandra* in his hand; if I call for Drink, the Butler brings me a *Spencer*, or a *Ben Johnſon*.

Lady M. If this be all you have to ſay *Sir Maurice*; Farewel.

Sir Maur. No, Angry Mother of the Muſes, give me but Attention, and you ſhall hear; your Daughters Wit it ſeems is like to ſtarve her Love: I'm told ſhe deſigns to keep Hoſpitality in another World, and Feaſt the worms with her Maiden-Head.

Lady M. What ſtrange *Jargon*'s this?

Sir Maur. But *Mariana* being not altogether ſo Witty, but like a ſimple Creature, deſirous to keep Houſe in this World; 'tis time to think of a Huſband for her.

Lady M. 'Tis what my preventing Wiſdom has already determined; I have engag'd to Sir *Timoth*, that his Son ſhall be the Man; he is a Perſon of deep parts, and that's in my Opinion the only way to infuſe the Spirit of Improvement into your Daughter?

Sir Maur. Did you not perceive by my Daughters Diſcourſe with Mr. *Witleſs*, that ſhe has no great liking to him; why ſhould we force her Inclination my Dear.

Lady M. What now? will you offer to Contradict me; I have paſt my word, and it muſt be ſo.

Sir Maur. I am not ſo much againſt it my deareſt Dear, but only let's do things as they ſhould be done; let's give her a little time at leaſt, to Conquer her Averſion.

Lady M. 'Tis pity indeed, but my Determinations ſhould wait for the ſettling of the giddy Thoughts of ſuch an illiterate Creature as your Daughter; I am reſolved it ſhall be as I pleaſe, bid her be ready, for to morrow I'll ſend to Mr. *Engroſs* to bring the Writings this Evening to Seal.

Sir Maur. But my Dear in a Caſe of this importance.

Lady Maur. What, again? Hold your Tongue *Sir Maurcie*, I don't love people ſhould reply. [*Exeunt all but Sir* Maurice.

Enter Meanwell *to Sir* Maurice, *who ſtands hanging his Head in a Melancholy Poſture.*

Mean. I ſee your Lady going Brother, I ſuppoſe you have had ſome Diſcourſe about the buſineſs.

Sir Maur. Yes, Brother.

Mean. Well, and what's the Reſult of it pray, ſhall we have *Mariana*? Has ſhe given her conſent, is the thing agreed on?

Sir Maur. Not altogether.

Mean.

Mean. Does she deny?

Sir Maur. No.

Mean. Is the matter left in suspence?

Sir Maur. Not at all.

Mean. What then Brother, is it a Mystery never to be Revealed?

Sir Maur. I'll tell you Brother, she says that she has engag'd her word for Mr. *Witless*, and cannot recall it.

Mean. And what did you say to it pray, did you accept of him?

Sir Maur. I! No; God forbid.

Mean. What Answer then did you make?

Sir Maur. None at all, and I am glad I did not, for fear she should have disputed me into a consent.

Mean. The Reason is admirable Brother; but did you at least propose *Clerimont* to her?

Sir Maur. No Brother, I had more Wit I assure you; look you, when I heard her Name Mr. *Witless*, I thought my mentioning *Clerimont* would but Exasperate her the more.

Mean. Your Prudence Brother amazes me, an't you ashamed of your soft, and easie temper?

Sir Maur. Brother I love Peace, and my Wife is a terrible Dragon when once out of Humour; she makes indeed a High Boast of her Philosophy, but she is not a bit the less Cholerick for it, and her Morals that teach her to look upon all things with an indifferent Eye, have not the least Influence upon her Passions; she is still Woman all over Brother.

Mean. This is Mockery, perfect Mockery Brother, your VVife Rules because you are faint hearted; take my word 'tis the way of Cunning, and designing VVives as soon as they are Married, Nicely to study the Temper of their Husbands, and thence Usurp Power in proportion to their weakness.

Sir Maur. In sober sadness I'm to blame, my Neighbours take Notice of it I hear, and I begin to be weary on't. Faith I do Brother.

Mean. For shame, good Brother do not make your self such a Ninny, as to suffer that puny thing woman to lead you by the Nose; pluck up a Spirit, shew your self a Man; and when your wife has the ill manners to Argue with you, tell her in a Tone of Authority such is my VVill and Pleasure.

Sir Maur. You are in the right Brother, [*Cocking his Hat*] come I'm resolv'd I'll shew more Courage for the future.

Mean. VVell said.

Sir Maur. 'Tis a disgrace for a Man to submit to the Capricious Humour of a wife.

Mean. Very well.

Sir Maur. She has abused my Patience too long.

Mean. Very true.

Sir Maur. Too much imposed upon me.

Mean. That's certain.

Sir Maur. And ſhe ſhall know to day, that my Daughter is my Daughter, and that it belongs to me, and to no body elſe, to diſpoſe of her as I pleaſe.

Mean. Now 'tis as it ſhould be, I am overjoy'd at the change.

Sir Maur. You Know *Clerimont*'s Lodgings, pray call upon him, and tell him, I muſt ſpeak with him inſtantly.

Mean. I am going to the *Exchange*, to hear what News from *Hamburgh*, for I had notice this morning that our Ship is ſafely arrived, and I'll ſee him as I go. [*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE Changes.

Sir Timothy's *Lodgings.*

Enter Clerimont, Trap.

Trap. HEre he comes, compoſe your ſelf a little, and forbear Laughing if you can ——— Sir, here's Mr. *Le Brall*, [*Enter* Witleſs.] the beſt Dancing-maſter in Town, is come to wait on you.

Witl. Sir, your very profound, humble Servant.

Cler. Your man informs me, Sir, that you have a deſire to learn the graceful motions of our Art, I ſhall be proud of ———

Witl. But firſt tell me, Sir, could I learn to Dance by Grammar? I love to do things methodically.

Cler. That can't be, Sir; for the Perfection, or End of our Art is chiefly to reform the rude, and clowniſh Geſtures of the Body, which is a thing meerly practical.

Witl. Whether you know it or no, I can tell you, Sir, your Art is very ancient, I have read ſomewhere in *Juvenal*, that there was a Ball in *Noah*'s Ark.

Cler. Oh, Sir, that's but a Trifle, we derive the Pedigree of Dancing much higher.

Witl. But now let's ſee what we have to do, I am ſoon to marry, and I have ſent for you, Mr. *Le Brall*, to teach me to Dance as curiouſly as you can, for 'twould be a ſhame for a Gentleman, and a Scholar as I am, that any body ſhould outdo me at my own Wedding.

Cler. Don't you queſtion, Sir, but I ſhall come off with credit; but pray when is the day?

Witl. To-night, I hope.

Cler. What! ſo ſoon, Sir! you confound me.

Trap. Don't let that fright you, Mr. *Le Brall*, my Maſter is not like other People, his Brains circulate to his very Heels; I'll engage for him, that he'll learn as much in two hours, as he would do in a quarter of a year!

Cler. Oh,

Cler. Oh, if ſo, we are well enough —— Come, Sir, your Hat — So: — Your Shoulders — Very well: —— Your Arms —— To a marvel: —— Hold up your Head — So: —— Your right Foot forward — So: —— Turn out your Toes — So: — Keep your Body ſtreight — Admirable: —— Make your Honours —— Nothing can be more exact.

[*Teaching Witleſs, who performs awkardly.*

Witl. Well, what do you think on't, Maſter? I fancy I do pretty well.

Cler. You amaze me, Sir, with your Dexterity.

Witl. Don't you think my Miſtreſs will be tranſported to ſee me dance ſo well? You muſt be at the Wedding, Maſter, remember I invite you.

Trap. He'll be there I don't queſtion, and one of the chief Actors, I hope. [*Aſide.*

Cler. You honour me, Sir; but will you pardon my Curioſity, if I preſume to ask the Lady's Name who is to be ſo happy?

Witl. My Miſtreſs, and future Spouſe, Sir, is one Mrs. *Meanwell.*

Cler. Which of 'em —— *Mariana?*

Witl. The very ſame.

Cler. If ſo, then I muſt needs ſay, ſome People have better Luck than they deſerve.

Witl. What can be the meaning of this?

Cler. Nothing, nothing, Sir, I have been too raſh I ſee.

Witl. Surely there is ſomething of myſtery in this; pray, good Mr. *Le Brall*, inform me.

Cler. No, Sir, men of my Profeſſion ought to be ſecret.

Witl. 'Dzlife, I can bear no longer! pray, good Maſter, do not keep me thus in ſuſpence; I ſwear by the Univerſity, your Kindneſs to me ſhall do you no diſſervice.

Cler. Upon your word, Sir?

Witl. Upon my Word and Honour.

Cler. Look you, Sir, Sir *Maurice* is my Friend, Mrs. *Meanwell* too is one I value; but ſurely when a Perſon of your Character is going to be groſsly cheated even by thoſe he leaſt ſuſpects, I cannot, I muſt not be ſilent, I'll deal frankly with you, Sir, Do you in the buſineſs as you think fit.

Witl. Oh ſweet Mr. *Le Brall*, how good you are!

Cler. The young Lady, Sir, to my knowledge has an intimate Engagement with a certain Spark, that would make nothing of cutting your Throat, ſhould he by chance diſcover, that you are reſolved to go on in your Amour; ſhe loves him ſo paſſionately too, that I heard her once vow to him, ſhe'll have none but him for a Husband.

Witl. Say you ſo? The poor Fool! how I pity her! I have done with her, I warrant her: What, did the ſilly Creature fancy a Man of my Exploits and Fame can want Women? Bleſs me! the World to me is like the Seraglio to the Grand Signior.

Cler. Beſides, I muſt tell you by the by, that her Humour is too *French*, and Airy, for a man of your ſolid Parts; who knows, but that it may in time degenerate into Coqueterie.

Witl. A word to the Wife, I underſtand you, Maſter; the Spark ſhan't cut my Throat I warrant him, nor the Jipſey make a Cuckold of me I promiſe her; a Coquet, 'Dzniggers! Let who will take her, the cheating Devil made this morning as if ſhe had been a very reſerved Saint.

Cler. Woman, Sir, is a Riddle, a meer Compound of Contradictions, whoſe meaning you'l never find out, but by miſtaking her words.

Trap. Bleſs me, Sir, there was a narrow Eſcape for us now, thank your Stars and M. *Le Brall* for it.

Witl. Oh the ſubtle Crocodile! how I hate her! Nay, ſhe is Illiterate too, and underſtands neither *Greek* nor *Latin.*

Cler. Nay, I fancy ſhe deſpiſes Dancing too, for I have often obſerved her making Faces at her Siſter when I was teaching her.

Witl. Then you go to Sir *Maurice*'s ſometimes, Maſter?

Cler. Ay, that I do three times a week.

Witl. Oh! what would I give you were there within this hour! for I'm reſolved to go, and give a parting Lecture to that falſe, cunning, jilting, profligate Minx.

Cler. I'll endeavour to be there; but pray not a word from whence you had it, you'd ruine me.

Witl. Upon the word of a Batchelor of Arts, not a tittle; be there only, and I'll make you Sport I warrant you for this Kindneſs, I'll ſo rattle the little Jade before you ——.

Trap. On my Conſcience this is a wicked World; there is no Faith in a Woman, who cheats even with her modeſty.

Witl. [*Going.*] Mr. *Le Brall*, remember within an hour —— Oh the Devil!

Trap. [*Following.*] Oh the Woman! [*Exeunt* Witleſs *and* Trap.

Cler. [*Solus.*] Fortune, her Blindneſs, does too plainly ſhow,
When on an Aſs ſhe would her Gifts beſtow;
For though ſhe ſtill deſires, not to forſake him,
A Fool's but what a Man of ſenſe will make him: *&c.*

ACT IV.

SCENE Sir Maurice's *Houſe.*

Enter Lovewit *and* Catchat.

Lovew. PRay, good Aunt, what makes you ſo very earneſt to know, if that *Clerimont* be quite out of my mind?

Catch. Kindneſs to you, Child, nothing elſe; I know he is Engaged ſomewhere elſe, and I would not have you love in vain.

Lovew. But

Lovew. But ſtill what makes you fancy it ſo very difficult a thing for me to hate that man? Have my Words or Looks at any time betrayed ſuch a mighty Paſſion for him?

Catch. He boaſted of it once; how far he had reaſon to do it, you know beſt.

Lovew. Preſumptuous! And could you that know me, Aunt, believe I ſhould make choice of one, who counts it a ſcandal in our Sex to pretend to Wit?

Catch. No, dear Niece, I could hardly imagine you'd think that man worthy of your Eſteem, who takes all occaſions to Ridicule the excellent Talents the World admires in you.

Lovew. Unmannerly! he ſpares no body; I hear even your ſelf, Aunt, don't eſcape his Satyr.

Catch. Stupid! Whatever Approbation your Poetry meets with among the Wits, he is always the laſt to commend it.

Lovew. Ignorant! I have twenty times read things of your Compoſing to him, which he could not forbear calling Stuff and Nonſence to my Face.

Catch. Impertinent! I have had a thouſand Quarrels with him upon your account.

Lovew. All this, and more perhaps, I could have diſpenſed with, but one thing my Philoſophy could not forgive him, that he had hardly loved me two Years before he began to talk of Marriage —— Fough!

Catch. Oh the filthy Beaſt! Fough! it turns my Stomach I proteſt.

Lovew. Lord! what a bold and impudent Creature is man, to dare mention the word *Marriage* to a Woman of Wit and Fortune? For tis no more than with fawning Words, and paſſionate Speeches, to deſire her very civilly to mend his condition, and make her ſelf his Slave.

Catch. Faith, Niece, 'tis e'en ſo.

For the ſoft Joys of Love no longer laſt,
When once the fatal Yea *our Lips has paſt;*
Then we begin to court, and to comply,
And find we only Rule, while we Deny.

Lovew. Out upon thoſe Treacherous Syrens, cruel and bewitching Monſters, who charm us into Ruine, and greedily devour our Subſtance.

Catch. But what ſay you to this, Niece? I know men in Town, who were born with the beſt Diſpoſitions in the World to make good Husbands, who yet as ſoon as they came to be married, leſt they ſhould be laugh'd at for their Singularity, affected a Peeviſhneſs, which was not natural to them; and rather than their Wives ſhould have the Pleaſure or Benefit of their good Humour, force themſelves into a ſullen Temper; they are true Friends, and merry Companions abroad, but very ill Husbands at home, and make it their buſineſs to appear Good to every body, but their own Wives.

Lovew. And muſt I Careſs ſuch an Owl? Muſt I humour ſuch a Fop in every thing? Muſt I obey a Fool, who cannot command his Paſſions, and thinks

thinks a Wife was given him as the Brutes of the Creation, only to ſerve him? No, help me *Reaſon*, and neither *Clerimont*, nor any man living, ſhall ever boaſt of my Ruine.

Enter Clerimont, *who ſtands behind* Lovewit *unſeen.*

Cler. Why ſo angry, Madam? What! a Philoſopher, and paſſionate?

Lovew. Were I as angry as you pretend, Sir, I could perhaps find Reaſons to juſtifie my Reſentment; a Heart unfaithful and inconſtant, is a Monſter in Love, as well as Morality.

Cler. Can you call that Infidelity, Madam, which was occaſioned by your Slights? 'Tis true, the Sacrifice you diſdain'd, I have ſince offered to another, but ſtill 'tis not I forſook you, 'tis you diſmiſs'd me.

Lovew. If I deferred to Crown your Wiſhes, 'twas only becauſe you were not indifferent to me; I hoped Time would have improved your Love to the Purity and Perfection of mine, but your Thoughts, I find, cannot keep themſelves free from the filthy Commerce of the Fleſh, nor your Soul reliſh the raviſhing Pleaſure of the Union of two Hearts, when the Body, that nauſeous, naſty Thing, does not come in for a Share.

Cler. It is my misfortune, Madam, to be ſenſible that I have a Body as well as a Soul; your refined Love is a piece of Philoſophy too high for me to comprehend, and my Senſes ſtick a little too cloſe to me, to leave it in my power to ſhake 'em off.

Lovew. Oh! what a ſtrange ſort of Love you men are for! Surely 'twas deſigned for Brutes only, Creatures inſpired by a Soul Divine ſhould, methinks, raiſe themſelves higher, and not ſuffer the ſweet and fruitful Imagination of Pleaſure to be filthily drown'd in an impure and beaſtly Enjoyment.

Cler. Platonick Love, Madam, does not agree with my Conſtitution; my Body is a Rebel, and will not always keep ſubject under the Empire of the Mind, I cannot help it.

Lovew. Well then, ſince there is no other way, ſince your brutiſh Sentiments muſt carry it againſt the Purity of my Reaſons, ſince none but Carnal Fetters will bind you, endeavour to get my Mother's Conſent, I'll try if I can prevail with my Philoſophy.

Cler. No, Madam, it is now too late had this kind Intention of yours—

Catch. I told you as much, dear Niece, but you would not believe me.

Cler. My Heart, Madam, is no more in my power.

Catch. I know that well enough.

Lovew. If your Heart, Sir, is not in your power, mine is, and I had rather pierce it, than throw it away on one, who does not underſtand the value of it. [*Exit.*

Catch. Poor Niece! ſhe might have ſaved her ſelf all this fretting —— I pity the Child with all my Heart —— Come, *Clerimont*, the time of Ceremony is now over, you may ſpeak more freely, I give you leave.

Cler. Speak, Madam! I have nothing to ſay, but only, that I muſt take my leave of you, I have a little buſineſs with Sir *Maurice* within.

Catch. I

Catch. I see you are an exact Lover, afraid of breaking any of your Mistress's Commands: 'Tis true, I forbid you this Morning to Express your self too passionately, but your Modesty Conquers me: Speak your Heart; do, I will not be Angry.

Cler. I vow, Madam, all your words are riddles to me.

Catch. Nay *Clerimont*, can you think me stupid to that degree, as not to discern your Passion for me; believe me, there can be no shame in Adoring such Beauty as mine; you are not the first by a thousand has counted it an Honour to die for this Face.

Cler. Why all this Fustian to me, Madam? I am neither blind, nor ready to be begg'd for a Fool.

Catch. I see you are a bashful Lover; and to give you the greatest Instance of my Condescension that ever Mortal boasted of, I will save you the Ceremony of a Declaration, and take it for granted, that you die for me; is it not so, *Clerimont*?

Cler. I protest, Madam, I know nothing of it—— How shall I get rid of this Devil? [*Aside.*

Well, Madam, since nothing else will satisfie you, and a Declaration you must have, give me but time till to morrow, and I'll desire no more.

Catch. [*Aside.*] This is Formality, I'm sure, meer Formality, nothing else. I know he must come to it at last, whether he will or no——— But come, so far I must gratifie a Lover.

Adieu, *Clerimont*; dear *Clerimont*, adieu till to morrow; I mean, if you can live till then. [*Exit.*

Clerimont. [*Solus.*] Surely angry Heaven could not have plagued Mankind with a greater Curse, than these fawning, greedy, preying Catchats of our Age, fond, and Libidinous Monsters, who, Proud when young, turn Wanton in their declining; and Nature now revenging her self upon 'em, they are at last devoured by that Fire they refused to quench before. But I must in, lest the Fool comes, and surprises me before I have seen my Angel.

Enter Mariana *to* Clerimont *as he is going in.*

Cler. O charming *Mariana!* you are as welcom to me, as the Sun to a Traveller after a Storm; I have been set upon by two loving, persecuting Devils, who, without any mercy, would have robbed you of my Heart, but I'll defend it for you, as long as it affords me Life to do it.

Mar. I trust too much to your Honour and Constancy to fear any Rival; but there is a more dangerous Enemy alarms my Love, my Mother-in-Law, who, like a Fury, was just now haunting Sir *Maurice*, to fret and torment him into Compliance.

Cler. As you trust to my Constancy, fair *Mariana*, trust also to my Care and Diligence, the witty Wife shall not hector long, the Plot is ripe; and the faithful couple, *Trap* and *Lucy*, bid me not doubt of success.

Mar. But as to the Directions you sent me in your Note.

Cler. You know 'tis both to make our ſelves ſport with the *Cambridge* Ninny, and to remove the Brute; put on for once the Vizard of a Coquet, and you ſhall ſee rare play.

Mar. Were it not to ſecure *Clerimont* to my Wiſhes, I could never have prevail'd with my ſelf to beſtow one kind Word, or ſmiling Look on his Rival.

Cler. This is the only time, Madam, I ſhall ever ask you to diſſemble.

Mar. Then let him come when he will, I'll play the Jeſuit for once; and while I throw away fond Speeches upon him, direct my Intention to you.

Cler. But here comes the Booby ———

Enter Witleſs, *who affects to look ſullen, and places himſelf between* Clerimont *and* Mariana.

Cler. You ſee, Sir, I am here beforehand with you; but, I vow, my waiting for you did not at all ſeem tedious to me: Mrs. *Meanwell* is ſo tranſported at the thoughts of her approaching Happineſs, that ſhe could not forbear telling me a thouſand pretty things of her Love, or boaſting pleaſantly, how bleſſed ſhe'd ſoon be in a Huſband.

Witl. Perhaps ſo. [*Looking grum upon her.*

Mar. What, you a Lover, Sir! and ſo long from your Miſtreſs?

Witl. Softly, ſoftly, Madam! [*To Cler.*] She comes on rarely.

Cler. Did not I tell you, Sir?

Mar. [*Looking on* Cler.] Oh! how raviſh'd, how tranſported am I! to ſee the man my Heart adores; I would not change for an Empire the Bleſſing of ſo charming a ſight.

Witl. to *Cler.* Oddzookers! how brisk ſhe is, ſhe takes fire in a moment.

Cler. Stand upon your Guard, Sir; ſtand upon your Guard, I ſay.

Mar. Oh! I ſee Love playing in his Eyes, and little *Cupids* hid in every Smile.

Witl. By the Univerſity, ſhe is Romantick!

Mar. [*Looking on* Cler.] Oh! how impatiently do I live, till I am yours.

Witl. 'Dſlife, ſhe begins to grow uneaſie!

Cler. No doubt of it, Sir.

Mar. to *Cler.* Defer my Happineſs no longer if you love me, you are ſure of my Heart; why ſhould you deſire any further Tryal of my Conſtancy?

Witl. Hold, Lady *Pert*, hold, not ſo quick, I pray, I am not the Fool you imagine; thank our Stars, the *Witleſſes* are noted in the World for Brains, I won't be caught, not I.

Mar. What means my dear Heart, why ſo alarm'd?

Witl. What do I mean, ſay you? I mean, that you ſhan't make a Cuckold of me, by the Univerſity you ſhan't.

Mar. Bleſs me! why ſuch Diſcourſe, my pretty Fool?

Witl. Fool

Witl. Fool your ſelf —— That's all, forſooth; I did not know you before; but I am pretty well informed now what you are, I'll not marry a Coquet, not I —— [*To Cler.*] There I touch'd her Maſter.

Mar. to *Cler.* Oh! 'tis all in vain, I love none but you, and none but you will I ever have.

Witl. Stop there, ſays *Tim*, I'll take care of that Miſs, the *Witleſſes* ſhall never Reproach me for bringing Infamy into their Honourable Family.

Mar. [*Making as if ſhe were crying.*] Oh! I can hold no longer, you are too barbarous, Tygers are not more Unnatural than you are.

Cler. to *Witl.* Why ſo ſevere upon the Lady, Sir? —— I am ſorry now I was the occaſion of this, I proteſt I am.

Witl. Let her cry, what's that to me? Look you, Maſter, *Marcus Tullius Hudibras* ſays, That Women's Tears are like the Crocodile's, ſhed only to pity Fools into Ruine.

Cler. But, Sir, Methinks the tenderneſs of the Sex ——

Witl. Sweet Mr. *Le Brall*, let her blubber out her Venom. Did you never hear the ſaying of the wiſe man in *Plutarch*; When Dogs fall a ſnarling, Serpents a hiſſing, and Women a crying; the firſt means to bite, the ſecond to ſting, and the third to deceive?

Mar. Sir, your Suſpicions do me an injury.

Witl. I'll take care, Mrs. *Liquoriſh*, your Frolicks ſhall do me none.

Mar. But won't you hear me, Mr. *Witleſs?*

Witl. Hear you! no —— I'll have nothing to do with you, my Soul abhors you. Farewel coqueting, cheating, canting, cozening Flirt, farewel to you for ever. [*Exit.*

Mar. And farewel to you, my dear Fool.

Cler. You have acted your part to a miracle, the Coxcomb ſeems to be pretty well cured of his Love; however, for fear of a Relapſe, I'll Encourage honeſt *Trap* to go on in his Projects.

Enter Sir Maurice *diſturbed, and in a fright.*

Sir Maur. Oh! are you there?

Cler. Well, Sir, have your Arguments prevailed? May I flatter my ſelf with the hopes that your Lady ——

Sir Maur. Oh! my Wife is a Devil, a very Devil, Sir; ſhe uſes Magick on my Conſcience, it cannot be otherwiſe when I am from her, no man has more Courage than I, I feel my ſelf full of Spirit and Reſolution, but I am no ſooner got to her again, but three of her words, like a Spell, turn me into a Coward; I tried but juſt now, and as ſhe ſpoke, I proteſt, methought I heard Hell roaring, I ran away for fear.

Cler. This Devil might be reſiſted, Sir, if you would.

Mar. O dear, Sir! will you then give over? Will you leave your helpleſs Daughter expoſed thus to ——

Sir Maur. What would you have me do? You would not have me encounter Hell ſurely, would you? O Citizens, Citizens! how much better for a Wife is a quiet Fool, than a witty Scold! [*Perceiving Lady* M. *coming out, ſtarts*

on a ſudden.] Alack, alack, the Storm is a coming——— Do you but ſtand n that corner, and you'l ſee how ſhe plays the Devil.

Enter Lady Meanwell, *thruſting out* Lucy.

Lady M. Be gone, Trapes, be gone, and be never ſo daring, as to ſhew your Face in my Houſe again.

Sir Maur. Alack, alack! ſhe is come to conjure, I ſee a Devil before me already.

Mar. What's the matter now, *Lucy?*

Lucy. You may ask my Lady, for ſhe turns me away, and will not tell me why.

Sir Maur. Come, my dear Angel, my Paradiſe, don't be ſo ſevere to *Mariana*'s maid, ſhe is a good Servant, you know.

Lady M. How now, *Salomon* of the City, will you offer to take her part?

Sir Maur. Oh Lord! not at all, my Dear, I only ask what it is ſhe has done.

Lady M. What? Am I then to give Reaſons for what I do?

Sir Maur. I do not ſay you are, my Jewel.

Lady M. I will not be contradicted, Sir *Maurice*, you know it well enough.

Sir Maur. I find it ſo, my Honey-ſuckle, but if you love me, let me hear what's her Fault; has ſhe by chance broken ſome of your fine *China*, I can buy more for you.

Lady M. What a pitiful fancy is there, as if ſo trivial a thing could diſcompoſe my morals.

Sir Maur. Then 'tis ſomething of great moment I ſee, has ſhe ſtolen ſome of your Plate?

Lady M. That were but a Trifle.

Sir Maur. Oh! Oh! Mrs. *Lucy*, have you played the Thief, and pawned her Jewels?

Lady M. A great deal worſe ſtill.

Sir Maur. Worſe ſtill, ſay you? Then ſhe has defiled my Houſe, it muſt be ſo; Oh the Baggage!

Lady M. All this were nothing in compariſon of that horrid, ſcandalous, and exorbitant Offence ſhe is guilty of; hear it, Sir *Maurice*, ſince you have ſuch a mind to it, and excuſe her if you can with an Impudence beyond Example, and a ſhew of Ignorance that cannot be parallell'd in Hiſtory; ſhe had juſt now the ill manners to ſay in my hearing, That *Cowley*, the wretched *Cowley*, was as good a Poet, as the incomparable Sir *Maggott Jingle*.

Sir Maur. And is this all? Heaven be thanked; I thought ſhe had at leaſt ſet my Houſe on fire, or raviſh'd my Butler.

Lady M. What's this mighty Wonder now? Is a Crime of this Nature a ſlight matter think you?

Mar.

Mar. With ſubmiſſion to the Wits, Madam, I do not conceive ſuch a Fault as this is puniſhable by the Laws of *England*; beſides, I never knew before, that my Maid was hired to admire Sir *Maggot Jingle*.

Lady M. How now, little Muſhroom? Are you one of her Advocates too? I ſhall indeed mind your pretty Reaſons.

Lovew. You'l want your faithful Confident, Siſter.

Mar. I hope there will be no need of a Confident ſoon.

Lady M. I underſtand your meaning, pretty Miſs, but your Buſineſs is done, I can aſſure you —— Sir *Maurice*, I expect Sir *Timothy* here this Evening to ſeal the Writings, be you in the way —— [*To Mariana.*] And you that have hitherto controul'd my Will, ſhew your ſelf Refractory now if you dare.

Mar. My Father's Commands ſhall ever be a ſupream Law to me.

Lady M. Then you are to learn, Mrs. *Lackwit*, that it muſt be my Husband's will, ſince it is my Pleaſure: Hold your impertinent Tongue I ſay, I am weary of your Nonſence —— Sir *Maurice*, I'll in, and give Orders for the Wedding, as I ſhall think fit in my Wiſdom —— [*To Lovewit.*] You Daughter, ſend immediately to Mr. *Engroſs* not to fail at the Hour appointed. [*Exit Lady M.*

Lovew I am ſorry, Siſter, Fortune proves ſo croſs to your Wiſhes; this World is full of Diſappointments. [*Exit Lovew.*

Sir Maur. [*To* Clermont, *coming from the corner where he ſtood liſtening.*] Now you ſee it very plain, I hope, that ſhe is a Witch, my Heart trembled every Word ſhe ſpoke. What do you think on't? Tell me freely, is ſhe not an Enchantreſs? A pox of a Philoſopher for a Wife, who the Devil would marry Wit.

Cler 'Tis more her Noiſe than her Wit keeps you in awe, Sir; raiſe but your Voice louder than hers when ſhe offers to ſpeak, and you'l ſilence her, I warrant you.

Mar. [*Kneeling.*] Oh, dear Sir! on my Knees let me intreat you, do not abandon me to her unreaſonable Humour, make uſe of your Power, you may do it, 'tis nothing but Goodneſs, too much Goodneſs in you makes her thus haughty and imperious.

Lucy. I vow, Sir, all the Neighbourhood cries ſhame upon you.

Sir Maur. I am as deſirous to have her Will oppoſed in this as any of you can be; but what can I do? How ſhall I deal with a Devil, that can at her pleaſure ſend a Legion of Evil Spirits to haunt and tear me a-pieces.

Cler. With all her Spells, and Magick Art, Sir; take my word, your Lady can't raiſe but one Evil Spirit, and that's her own; but if you dare to put on a good Reſolution, and follow my Directions, we'll conquer that Evil Spirit, I warrant you.

Mar. Once more, good Sir, try what you can do, the Happineſs of your own Child depends upon it —— Take pity of my Love.

Lucy. Come, Sir, pluck up a Courage, ſtand upon your Prerogative.

Sir Maur [*Cocks his Hat.*] Well —— If you'l ſecond me, I'll in, and let her know who is her Maſter.

Cler. Well ſaid.

Sir

Sir Maur. Tell her that none ought to rule in my Family but I.

Cler. Vigorously ſpoken.

Sir Maur. Declare to her that you muſt be my Son in Law, and no body elſe.

Cler. Kindly and Bravely reſolved.

Sir Maur. And that if ſhe offers to contradict me, I'll ſhut her up.

Lucy. In *Bedlam*, I hope.

Sir Maur. Come then, follow me all, and be ſure to ſtand by me.

Cler. Don't you fear it, Sir.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE Changes.

Sir Timothy's *Lodgings.*

Enter Trap *and* Huff.

Trap. LOok you *Roger*, 50 *l.* is the Sum, and the task but eaſie, for the Man is both a Fool and a Coward.

Huff. Honeſt *Jack*, Let me alone with him; You know I'd hang my Own Father for half the Money, but where's the Woman?

Trap. Oh! Leave that part to me; I'll produce her in good time:—— But here comes the Property, put on your Bloody Looks. [*Enter* Witleſs.

[Trap *ſeeing his Maſter coming, alters the Tone of his Voice.*]

I tell you Sir, My Maſter is a Man of Honour.

Huff. With all my heart, Sir.

Trap. A Man of Courage, Sir.

Huff. All the better Sir; all the better.

Trap. That has learnt to fence a whole Week; and ſhewn his Valour againſt the boldeſt Prentices in *Cambridge.*

Huff. [*Draws and thruſt at random, making as if he did not ſee* Witleſs, *who ſneaks behind* Trap.] His Valour! Blood and Thunder! Let me ſee him. Ounds would I had him here.—— There at his Heart,—— There under the Second Rib;—— Curſe on the ill luck, I han't kill'd a Man theſe three Days, and my Arm grows ſtiff for want of Exerciſe.

Trap. Pray Sir, Good Sir, be not ſo furious if you can help it; My Maſter is a Gentleman underſtands Reaſon as well as any body; He'll give you all the Satisfaction you can deſire, I'm ſure; but pray put up Sir, put up, let me intreat you.

Huff. [*Puts up his Sword.*] Well, Sir, Let's hear what is it you have to ſay?

Trap. I ſay, Sir, That this Gentleman here is my Maſter, and can give you the beſt Anſwer.

Huff. Humh, Sir, are you the Man they call Mr. *Witleſs?*

Witleſs. At your Service, good Sir, Honourable Sir.

Huff. Service! Blood and Thunder! 'Tis Juſtice I'll have, and no Service.

Trap.

Trap. Pray, Sir, Moderate your Paſſion.

Huff. Impertinent Varlet! hold thy peace, I charge you ——— [*To* Witleſs.] To be plain Sir, this is my buſineſs with you; You have diſhonoured my Family, and I muſt have your Blood for it.

Witleſs. I Sir! I proteſt I do not know you! I beg your pardon! ——— Alas, alas, *Jack*!

Huff. Not know me, Blood and Thunder! perhaps ſo; but you know a Relation of mine, and with a Pox to you, you have known her to good purpoſe.

Witleſs. Trap, Dear *Trap*, what's this? Can you gueſs what it is the Gentleman means?

Trap. Not I, by *Jericho*; I am thinking all this while, what can be the meaning of all this ſtuff.

Huff. Blood and Thunder! What muſt you ſtand there asking one another Queſtions; I tell you Sir, there are two ways and no more, either you muſt Marry my Cozen, you have after a moſt felonious manner impregnated, or elſe give me leave to cut your Throat preſently.

Witleſs. O Sweet Sir, Gracious Sir, look upon me; I am not the Man you take me for.

Huff. Blood and Thunder! don't you think I'll be put off with a Story; I'll have every drop of thy Blood before I'll ſuffer mine to be ſtained: Here is a Paper you muſt Sign, or by *Lucifer* the next word you ſpeak, for a denial, I'll make the whole Firmament ſhine through your Liver.

[Witleſs *reads the Paper.*

Trap. But kind honey Sir, is there no way to accommodate ———

Huff. What more Queſtions, you Pragmatical Dog, I'll order you.

Trap. I mean no harm to you, Good Sir, but methinks ———

Huff. Impudent Sycophant, I'll nail thy prating Tongue to the Wall.

Witl. Good ſweet obliging Sir, may I ſpeak two words with my Man.

Huff. Be ſhort, Rot you, be ſhort.

Witl. [*To* Trap *aſide.*] Look you *Jack*, this ſcurvy Paper is nothing leſs than a promiſe of Marriage in Blank; for ought I know I may be Married one of theſe days to ſome filthy *Sucbubus*; He threatens to kill me if I don't Sign it; What muſt I do *Jack*, ſpeak, what muſt I do?

Trap. Do? That's a pretty Queſtion indeed; Rather dye a thouſand times and more, than conſent to ſuch Infamy; This is ſome Impudent trick I warrant it, the huffing Raſcal has ſome Strumpet or other whom he has a mind to put off; Fight it out for ſhame ——— [*Draws*] I'll ſtand by you Sir.

Witl. [*Draws, gets behind* Trap *and thruſts over his Shoulder.*] Then *Trap* be ſtout; Come, you Blood and Thunder, here is my Anſwer for you.

Huff. Are you for the ſport then? have at you.

Witl. Puſh on brave *Jack*, puſh on.

Trap. [*Thruſts.*] Don't you fear Sir, ſpare him not ——— At his Heart directly if you can.

Huff. You Pandar, ſtand off, or by the Bloody Bones of *Dagon*, this Steel ſhall make it ſelf a paſſage to his Heart through yours.

Trap.

Trap. I Scorn your Words Sir, I'll dye upon the ſpot, rather than forſake my good Maſter; Thruſt on Sir, thruſt on, we'll Swindge him I warrant you.

Huff. Then Villain, take this——— [Trap *falls as if he were Wounded.* [*To* Witleſs.] Now for you Sir———

Witleſs. [*On his Knees.*] Oh Sir! Valiant Sir, put up I beſeech you, I'll do any thing, I'll ſign any Paper, I'll Marry any body.

Huff. I am very glad, Sir, to ſee you come to reaſon, for I have a great Eſteem for you, and 'twould have gone againſt my Heart, I vow, to kill a Gentleman who is to be my near Relation; here is the Paper, Sir, be pleaſed to ſet your hand to it, I love to be Civil.

Witl. Ay Sir; But if the Lady———

Huff. Blood and Thunder! What more reaſoning yet.——

Witl. Oh! No Sir, give me, give me—— [Witleſs *ſigns the Paper,*
Thete Sir——Alas, alas!——— *and gives it to* Huff.

Huff. Now dear Cozen *Witleſs*, your moſt humble Servant; I eſteem my ſelf very happy in the honour of your Alliance.

[*Exit.*

Witl. Pox of his Honour, ——— By the Univerſity I'm in a fine Pickle, bound to Marry a Witch for ought I can tell; and my Honeſt, my Faithful, my Fighting *Trap* murdered.

Trap. [*Lifting his head.*] Bleſs me, Sir, is the Man gone?

Witl. Oh Fortune! *Trap* alive?

Trap. [*Riſes.*] Ay Alive, and Unhurt, I hope.

Witl. How! Unhurt, *Jack*; Did not I ſee you fall Dead upon the place?

Trap. No, on my word, Sir, 'twas only a certain Giddineſs takes me at the ſight of a Naked Sword; 'tis an infirmity I had from my Youth.

Witl. Pray feel *Jack* if I am wounded; I may be Killed for ought I know.

Trap. Nay you are in the right, for in the heat of Fighting 'tis ſeldom wounds are felt, can you Whiſtle, let's hear.——— [Witleſs *whiſtles in a*
That's well. Now let me ſee you Jump three times for *ridiculous manner.*
the three Kingdoms. [*Jumps three times.*
Oh rare! I warrant you Living, and as ſound as a Roach; but pray now, what have you done about the Paper, the Curſed Paper.

Witl. Oh! The Villain made me ſet my Hand to it; I thought, *Jack*, 'twas better doing ſo, than be butchered by that Turk, and Infidel; His very Looks are enough to fright one out of Life; I vow as he ſtood thruſting at us, methought I ſaw Death and Maſſacre peeping out of the Corners of his Eyes; but I'll be even with him, I warrant him, for before *Sir Timothy* can hear of this, I'll to my Uncle in the *Temple*, and Hang the Rogue.

Trap. Pray while his hand is in, let him diſpatch the Lady in Blank too, for if the Jade be once hanged, no Law in *England* can oblige you to marry her.

Witl.

Witl. VVell considered Faith; follow me *Jack*, and let's lose no time. [*Exit.*

Trap. By no means Sir.

Hanging will fail, I know, but I decree,
The Marriage-Knot shall more successfull be;
And of these two the Destinies have told,
No matter which, so either of 'em hold.

ACT V.

Sir Maurice's *House.*

Sir Timothy VVitless, VVitless.

Witl. BUt, Sir, a Coquet, a French Coquet, the word frights me; She'll have too much mettle for me: I shall be a Cuckold by the University I shall.

Sir Tim. I have known your Mistress from a Child, *Tim*, and I am satisfied with my Choice; take this from me, Young Man, there is more Innocency in that brisk, pleasant, and free humour of hers, than in the sullen, rigid, and severe temper of many of her Sex, who thinking their Character secures 'em even from the Suspicion of Vice, Blind and deceive the VVorld with a false appearance of Virtue, only to play their Under-game the more securely.

Witl. But, Sir, is there no certain compass for a Man to steer by upon the stormy Sea of Matrimony, without splitting against the Rock of Cuckoldom?

Sir Tim. There is no certain rule for it, *Tim*; however, let me give you this advice, Love your Wife heartily and sincerely, be kind and faithful to her, and do not starve her Longings; This is the best rule I know to keep her honest.

Witl. 'Dslife! must a Husband then be bound to his good behaviour?

Sir Tim. Yes certainly; for 'tis the most Unaccountable thing in the VVorld for a Man to complain that his VVife is not Virtuous, to whom he gives the worst Example for Vice; Her disloyalty cannot be justified that's true; but still his anger is Unreasonable. Look to your self *Tim* when you come to be Married, for on my conscience 'tis a dangerous thing to provoke a VVife, who has always a revenge at hand.

Witl. But, Sir, I may be kind to my VVife, and yet a Cuckold, what then?

Sir Tim. Oh! In that case Boy, you must, like a VVise Alderman, put your Hands into your Pockets and VVhistle.

Wil. Zookers! and is this all?

Sir Tim. No *Tim*, there is ſtill this comfort left you, that the Horners of the Town make ſome Conſcience of their way, and are not quite ſo bad as Thieves and Robbers, who plunder and go away with all; No, the Gentlemen are mannerly, I muſt ſay that for 'em, for if they by chance break in, they take but juſt as much as will ſerve their turn, and always leave enough for a Man.

Wil. Mercy, Sir! commend me to good breeding; but ſtill my Honour Sir, my Honour: can your Mannerly Gentlemen take it away by bits and halves too.

Sir Tim. Honour Boy is but the Vulgar Error of Jealouſie, or the Bugbear of a Sick fancy; make no noiſe *Tim* and all may be well, for to my knowledge many a Man go for Cuckolds in the VVorld, who are not really ſo, and many are deeply ſo, who have not the reputation of it. ——— But here come the Ladies.

Enter Lady Meanwel, Catchat, Lovewit, *and* Engroſs, *with VVritings.*

Lovew. Come Mr. *Engroſs*, you muſt change your rude and barbarous Style, and put theſe Articles of Marriage into more rhetorical Language; try if you can flouriſh them a little with a few paſſages out of *Partheniſſa*, Grand *Cyrus*, or ſo.

Engroſs. Our ſtyle, Madam, is like the Laws of the Medes and Serpents unalterable.

Catch. Your Cuſtom is a ſtrange Tyrant ſure, methinks you might at leaſt be ſo Gentile, as to date after the Roman manner, by Ides and Calends.

Engroſs. This is a contract between Engliſh Parties, and no Romans, Madam, You confound me.

Catch. But for all you Mr. *Engroſs*, when I Marry, which I know will be ſoon now, I'll have all my VVritings drawn in Hieroglyphicks, and ſome Egyptian Prieſt, or Brachman of *India* to perform the Office.

Engroſs. Faith, Lady, thoſe Gentlemen live a great way off, and if you ſtay to Marry, till their arrival, your Virginity will deſerve a place in the *Oxford Nackatory*, among the pieces of Antiquity.

Enter Sir Maurice, Clerimont, *and* Mariana.

Cler. [*To Sir* Maur.] Remember, Sir, that your Wife is but a Woman, a meer Woman, and no Devil, no Enchantreſs.

Sir Maur. I'll order her, I warrant you, do but obſerve me.

Maria. Conſider, Dear Sir, I'm undone if ſhe prevails.

Sir Maur. Don't you fear it, Child.

Lovew. [*To* Catch.] I cannot but admire at my Siſter's fancy; that ſhe ſhould bring in *Clerimont*, to be a Witneſs of his Rivals Triumph.

Catch.

Catch. You are miſtaken ſtill in *Clerimont*, Niece, he is carrying on another Intrigue than People imagine; I ſay little, but the thing will ſoon come out.

Lady M. Are you ready Mr. *Engroſs*?

Engroſs. I want only the Names of the Parties; which is the Bride pray?

Lady *M.* Here Sir, my Daughter-in-Law.

Sir Maur. Very well; her Name is *Mariana*, Sir. [Engroſs *writes.*

Engroſs. Now for the Bridegroom.

Lady *M.* Here's the Gentleman, Sir, Mr. *Timothy Witleſs.*

Sir Maur. And I ſay here's the Gentleman, Sir, Mr. *Charles Clerimont.*

Engroſs. Hey day! Two Husbands to one Wife, that's more than the Law allows, though perhaps no more than a Woman could very well diſpenſe withal.

Lady *M.* [*To Engroſs.*] VVhy do you regard what other people ſay, Mr. *Engroſs*?

Sir Maur. [*To Engroſs.*] Did I not name *Clerimont* to you? what makes you ſtare?

Engroſs. Uddsbudds! agree among your ſelves if you will, I'll go no further elſe.

Witl. [*aſide.*] VVhat a Pox, my Dancing Maſter my Rival; Old *Sir Maurice* ſure, has a mind to make himſelf merry with him.———

Enter Trap, *who takes Sir* Timothy *aſide.*

Trap. There's a Lady and a Gentleman below, Sir, have earneſt buſineſs with you.

Sir Tim. Surely thou art mad, couldſt not thou tell 'em I was abroad.

Trap. Oh Sir! You never ſaw ſuch a Man in your Life, 'm ſure; I told him a thouſand times at leaſt, that you were here about buſineſs of great Importance; but he very unmannerly clap'd a Piſtol to my Breaſt, and Swore I was a dead Man, if I did not bring him to you immediately.

Sir Tim. VVhat can this mighty buſineſs be? ——With *Sir Maurice*'s leave bring 'em in.

Sir Maur. [*To Engroſs.*] Come make an end, Mr. *Engroſs*, do as I bid you, for I have paſt my word, and I won't be an Aſs. [*Sir* Timothy *walks about the Door* Huff *and the Lady are to come in at.*

Lady *M.* And ſo have I, *Sir Maurice*, and *I* won't be a Gooſe, but ſince there is no remedy, and my will *I* muſt have in ſpite of your Teeth, my Daughter here ſhall diſengage your word, the Gentleman, if he knows how to value VVit, will thank me ſure for this piece of Condeſcenſion.

Cler. Your Daughter, Madam, may be a Miracle of VVit and Beauty, but ſtill *I* cannot but glory in owning to you, that *I* had rather dye a thouſand times than renounce my Love.

Catch. [*aſide.*] They might have propoſed one to him, *I* know, would have been more acceptable.

Lovew. [*To Cler.*] There was no need for you, Sir, to put your ſelf to the Expence of ſo fiery a proteſtation; I am not in ſo deſperate a condition yet, as to rob my Siſter of her few Admirers.

Cler. I ſhall never deſire, Madam, to put you to the tryal.

[*Enter* Huff *and* Lucy *diſguiſed like a great belly'd Woman, Sir* Tim. *and* Huff *ſeem to argue very hotly at the Entrance.*

Huff. [*Breaks from Sir* Timothy, *and comes towards the Company.*] An Impoſtor! Blood and Thunder! I an Impoſtor! we ſhall try that, by *Lucifer*, we ſhall.

Sir Maur. Pray, Sir, what's the matter? why in ſuch a paſſion?

Huff. [*blowing.*] Sir I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon; You look like a Gentleman, and though a Stranger to me I'll not ſcruple to make you a Judge between *Sir Timothy*, and this diſconſolate Lady: Let me but compoſe my ſelf a little, for his rudeneſs has ſtrangely diſordered me.

[*While* Huff *is ſpeaking*, Lucy *falls a hugging and careſſing* Witleſs.

Lucy. O ſweet Honey! Cream of my Joys, have I found thee at laſt, I muſt Hugg thee; I muſt Buſs thee till my Lips ach.

Witl. Away, Satan, away; I know thee not.

Lucy. O dear pretty ſmiling Rogue, how I Love thee! How Charmingly thou lookeſt; I vow thou wert unkind not to write to me, I muſt Kiſs thee for that too.

Witl. By the Univerſity, the Women of this Town are as hot as Hell-Fire.

Huff. [*To Sir Maurice.*] I ſhall not trouble you, Sir, with a long ſtory; the Gentlewoman you ſee here is a near Relation of mine, who lived in *Cambridge*; She always had the reputation of as Modeſt and Virtuous a Lady as ever that Town bred, but her Eyes having the fatal Luck to boyl Mr. *Witleſs*'s Blood into a Ferment, the young Gentleman would never be ſatisfied without a full Enjoyment of her Unfortunate body: She held out a great while, the poor Creature, but the Devil being powerful, and Female Fleſh Frail and Willing, ſhe was forced to Capitulate, and ſurrender the Fort of her Honour upon Articles; to be ſhort Sir, he gave her a promiſe of Marriage: Now hearing he was to be married to another, I made bold to intrude my ſelf, the buſineſs being of ſuch conſequence, as will I hope Apologize for the freedom.

Witl. [*aſide to Sir Timothy.*] I aſſure you Sir, 'tis an Impudent Lie, the fellow has told, examine into the buſineſs a little, and you ſhall ſee.

Sir Maur. [*To Huff.*] Oddſlicks! There was no need, Sir, of Apologie for your coming; you are moſt Welcome I promiſe you, make the moſt you can of your buſineſs.

Sir Tim. [*To Huff.*] Sir, may I ſpeak two words with you?

Huff. Ay, Sir, with all my Heart.

Sir Tim You talk of a Promiſe of Marriage under my Son's hand, where is that Promiſe, pray, where is it?

Huff. Not far Sir,—— [*To Lucy.*] Come, Cozen, produce your Title to Mr. *Witleſs* his Body.

Lucy.

Lucy. I have two Sir,— [*Pulls a Paper which ſhe gives to Sir* Tim.] There is one of 'em,—— The other is forth coming.

Sir Tim. [*Shewing the Paper to* Witl.] *Tim.* is this your hand? Look?

Witl. Yes, Sir, ſo far I own. [*Sir* Tim. *reads to himſelf.*

Sir Maur. 'Sdlife! What will come of this pretty Story, there would be a wonder now, Ladies, ſhould a Scholar prove a Fornicator like other Men.

Sir Tim. Oh the filthy Monſter! Is this your *Cambridge* breeding with a Pox?

Witl. I proteſt Sir, I am innocent, I never laid with a Woman in my life— *but twice. *Every time* Witleſs *goes about to Vindicate himſelf*, Huff *lays his Hand upon his Sword, which makes him to recant.*

Sir Tim. But twice with a Rope to you! what muſt you be a thouſand times about it?

Witl. I Swear by both the Proctors of the Univerſity, I never attempted any thing upon the Sex—— without their conſent.

Sir Maur. Now Lady, ſurely here is a Lawful Impediment with a Vengeance, why Mr. *Witleſs* ſhould not be joyned in Matrimony to my Daughter.

Sir Tim. I'll Examine the Woman—— [*To Lucy.*] Pray Miſtreſs, where did you firſt know my Son?

Lucy. Your Son, Sir, Knew me firſt at *Cambridge.*

Sir Tim. Did he Viſit you often Miſtreſs?

Lucy. Not often; but when he did, 'twas to ſome purpoſe, I aſſure you, the laſt time he carried me to *Trumpington*, there he Feaſted me, the good Man, I never ſaw him ſo wanton in my Life.

Sir Tim. Trumpington! Oh the Damn'd Town! It lies upon the Road to Hell; I loſt my Maidenhead there before I knew I had one—— But pray how far are you gone Miſtreſs?

Lucy. My reckoning, Sir, as one may ſay, is from *Sturbitch*-Fair, we had a merry meeting there, I aſſure you, I ſhall remember it as long as I live.

Sir Tim. Oh, 'tis too true! I'll ask no more queſtions; I remember now I ſent him his Quarter about that time, it muſt be ſo; Oh the Villain!

Sir Maur. Now Witty Females; what have you to ſay to this? You may bragg of your Scholars indeed.

Catch. Brother, this failure of the Fleſh is a Natural propenſity, againſt which our Philoſophy preſcribes no Rules.

Witl. Give me leave, Sir, but to ſpeak now in my defence; and I'll warrant you I'll make it as plain as any thing—— [Huff *laying his hand on his Sword.*] that I have nothing to ſay againſt what the Gentleman ſpoke before.

Sir Tim. Hold thy peace then Silly Puppy—— [*To* Trap *aſide.*] Look you honeſt *Trap*, I have given thee Warning, that's true, but thou art a Civil Fellow; I'll keep thee, if thou can'ſt do me a piece of Service.

Trap. Oh Sir! Do you queſtion my Zeal? You wrong me I vow, were I to be diſmiſſed next Minute, I would part with you like a Chriſtian; pray what's the buſineſs, Sir?

Sir

Sir Tim. You ſee, *Trap*, this unlucky Wench is like to ſpoil my Son's match, I would have you take the man to your ſelf, and try what you can do with him. If a Preſent of 500 Guinea's will ſatisfie him, I'll give it freely; in the mean while, I'll make Sir *Maurice* believe 'twas only a miſtake.

Trap. Do you but look well to your part, Sir, and truſt me with mine, and I'll warrant you, things will go ſwimmingly on our ſide.

Sir Tim. [*To Sir* Maur.] All this Story, Sir *Maurice*, proves at laſt nothing but a miſtake; the man took my Son for one *Jeremy Witleſs* of *Briſtol*, now Liſted in *Flanders*. [Trap *takes* Huff *aſide, they make as if they were arguing together.*

Lady M. I thought indeed, a man of *Greek* and *Latin* was above thoſe Infirmities.

Huff. Blood and Thunder, 500 Guinea's! I'll hang the whole Generation of 'em before I take 6000 *l.* What, for pitiful 500 *l.* ſell the Honour of my Family! [*Walks backward and forward between* Trap *and the Company.*

Sir Maur. Sir *Timothy*, what's the matter now with the Gentleman? He makes a noiſe, and talks, I think, of 6000 *l.*

Sir Tim. The poor man is mad I fancy, that he has miſs'd his Prey; I ſuppoſe he ſays, he'd give 6000 *l.* to find him out.

Huff. [*Breaking off from* Trap.] Blood and Thunder, let me go; I'll cut the Throat of Father and Son, or I'll have better ſatisfaction before I part.

Enter Meanwell, *affecting a great ſadneſs.*

Mean. I am ſorry, Brother, I muſt make of this Day of Joy the moſt melancholy Day of your Life, by imparting to you the ſaddeſt News you could expect.

Sir Maur. Oh Heavens! Brother, what is it?

Mean. Our *Hamburgh* Ship has brought this diſmal Account, that Mynheer *Van Punk* is broke, and ——

Sir Maur. Alas! alas! I am undone, undone for ever, 20000 *l.* at a clap, I ſhall not be able to ſhew my Head.

Mar. Oh the unſeaſonable Misfortune!

Lady M. Why ſo concern'd, Sir *Maurice*? What, now your weak and puny Soul muſt fret, and be diſturbed at this! Thanks to Philoſophy, mine is firm and unſhaken.

Lovew. My Fortune is ſafe ſtill; what Love could not do, Intereſt may — I'll not deſpair. [*Aſide.*

Sir Tim. [*To* Witl.] Oddſzookers! the Caſe is altered: Hark you, *Tim*, I have always obſerved, that a man never thrives in the World that has wrong'd a modeſt Woman; therefore in point of Intereſt, as well as Conſcience, you muſt marry this Lady, and as a Pennance for your not Renouncing the Fleſh, Woman, and the Devil, ſwallow the bitter Cup of Matrimonial Twiſt.

Witl. I marry that Woman! Sir, I beg your Pardon, I ſhould be a Cornuto, and you know 'tis the only thing I hate.

Sir

Sir Tim. Good Boy, a man makes himſelf ridiculous in the World, that affects Singularity in any thing; you'l be Cuckolded a little before your time, that's true, but tis the faſhion now, therefore no Soul living will take notice of it.

Witl. Is it ſo upon your word, Sir? Or do you jeſt?

Sir Tim. Ay, *Tim*, upon my honeſt word 'tis e'en ſo —— Cuckoldom is a raging Grievance of the Nation for all my mincing the matter. Juſt now, believe me, as many men as you ſee walking in the Streets, are as many Cuckolds.

Witl. How ſo, pray? They are not all married ſure.

Sir Tim. There is all the difference, Boy; with thoſe that are married their buſineſs is done, with thoſe that are not, their buſineſs is now doing: It was ſo with you, and juſt ſo 'twill be with 'em, comfort your ſelf with that.

Witl. I am as glad as any thing 'tis ſo, I proteſt I am, for to tell you the truth, the thing diſturbed me a little; but ſince you ſay 'tis the Mode, I ſcorn to be ſingular.

Sir Tim. Beſides, *Tim*, Mrs. *Meanwell* has now loſt her Fortune, and Beggar for Beggar, 'tis much better for us you marry this good Lady here, for by this means we avoid a chargeable Suit, the man was talking of no leſs than 6000 *l.* Damages; hang him, 6000*l.* would undo us——

Witl. By the Univerſity, I do not think there is one thouſand Pounds difference between an Honeſt VVoman, and a Common one.

Cler. Oh the Brute! what pity 't had been a VVoman of Virtue had fallen to the Lott of ſuch a Fool, who does not underſtand the Value of ſo great a Treaſure. [*Aſide.*

Witl. By the tip of *Plato*'s Ear, I am of the opinion of that famous Poet *Tacitus*, who ſays, He had rather be Cuckolded by a pretty coakſing loving VVife, than eſcape the Diſhonour, either through the Ugline ſs, or the ſurly Virtue of one peeviſhly Honeſt.

Huff. Sir *Timothy*, I rejoyce to ſee things run thus in a right Channel, and to make my Joy compleat, I have but one Favour more to beg of you, *viz.* That Mr. *Witleſs*, and my dear Relation here, may be joyned inſtantly, for I am commanded with my Regiment for *Flanders* to morrow early, and I ſhould not croſs the Sea with a quiet Mind, ſhould I leave this piece of Work unfiniſh'd.

Sir Tim. With all my Heart, Sir, but where ſhall we find an Executioner?

Huff. I have a Levitical Conjurer below, who, with Sir *Maurice*'s leave, will give us a touch of his Black Art.

Sir Maur. My Houſe, Sir, is at your ſervice.

Sir Tim. What ſay you to it, *Tim*? Come hang Conſideration, the ſhorteſt Follies are beſt.

Witl. Come then, Pig in a Poke, away to the Conjurer, thou art not the firſt has carried a great Belly to the Parſon.

[*Exeunt Sir* Timothy, Witleſs, Huff, *and* Lucy.

Sir Maur.

Sir Maur. *Clerimont*, I promiſed my ſelf a great deal of Happineſs in the Honour of your Alliance; but ſince my Hopes are defeated, and I cannot, in the Circumſtances I am in at preſent, offer poor *Mariana* to you for a Wife; I muſt thank you for your Civilities to her, and wiſh you ſomewhere elſe a Fortune anſwerable to your Merit.

Cler. You offend me, Sir *Maurice*, with this Diſcourſe: As it was not for her Fortune I courted your fair Daughter, ſo this Loſs ſhall make no change in me; I love her better than ever I did, all I have in the World is hers, and conſequently at your ſervice.

Lovew. Then farewel to my Hopes there, I am put to my laſt Prayers indeed, but rather than fail I'll make ſure of Sir *Maggot Jingle*, his Wit ſhall be my Excuſe. [*Aſide.*

Mar. [*To Cler.*] No, *Clerimont*, you are too Generous, and whatever Violence I do to my Inclination in pronouncing the Words, we muſt part, Fortune has croſs'd my Wiſhes, and placed my Heart beneath you.

Cler. Oh killing words! Cruel *Mariana!* do you, do you oppoſe my Happineſs? Who could have ſuſpected it? My Heart was not prepared for ſo ſevere a ſtroke.

Mar. 'Tis not, *Clerimont*, becauſe I hate you, or love you leſs; Heaven, that ſees into my Breaſt, knows how pure and ſincere is my Love for you, but I am ſenſible that your Eſtate requires a preſent Fortune to make you eaſie: I wiſhed to be yours, when I had reaſon to hope my Father's Kindneſs would have made us live happily in the World; but ſince Heaven has decreed otherwiſe, I muſt not be ſo ungrateful to your Love, as to deſire to be an Obſtacle to your Fortune.

Cler. If you have not a mind, Divine *Mariana*, to ſee a ſad Lover expire at your Feet, forbear talking any more of Fortune, the whole World without you cannot make me happy, and with you I am richer than the greateſt Monarch upon Earth.

Mar. Fortune, which has robb'd me of all my Hopes, could not rob you of my Heart, it is yours, *Clerimont*, in ſpite of her, and if I owed it all before to your Love, what can I give now to your Generoſity?

Cler. Your ſelf, Madam, and in you all that this World can gratifie my Ambition withal.

Enter Sir Timothy, Witleſs, Huff, *and* Lucy.

Witl. [*Leading* Lucy, *and turning her round.*] I fancy the Sin is worth the owning, the Creature feels as a ſound piece of Mortality; 'tis but ſuppoſing the firſt night we lay together, that we have been married 4 or 5 months, and all is well.

Sir Tim. Good *Tim*, my mind is now at eaſe, to ſee you a man like my ſelf, and by this Heroick Act of yours do I know you to be of the true Blood of the *Witleſſes*, who for theſe five Generations have outbraved Cuckoldom: Come, thou art a good Boy, and haſt the true notion of the thing.

Witl.

Witl. Nay, I think I am as good a man as I was before; my Leg is as ſtreight now as it was in the morning, and I find not the leaſt alteration in my Health; why ſhould I be melancholy? I ſee no cauſe, not I.

Lucy. This is the Wheel of Fortune, Mr. *Witleſs*; when People boaſt of Favours they never enjoy'd, they come often to father Children they never got: [*Throws off her Diſguiſe.*] But ſee, you have better Luck than you deſerve.

Sir Tim. Hell and Furies! what have we here?

Lucy. Honeſt *Lucy*, at your ſervice, as pure a Virgin as ever was born—— for all your bragging, Mr. *Witleſs* — —

Witl. Trap, you *Trap*, by the Univerſity thy pretty Siſter —— Oddſzooks! 'tis well 'tis no worſe.

Trap. I had a pretty Match for her in my Eye, but ſince Deſtiny throws her upon you, I'll not contend with your Stars; take her and wear her, ſhe is yours, I hope you'l uſe her civilly.

Lady M. Surely Sir *Timothy* will not ſuffer his witty Son to be thus proſtituted to an illiterate *Abigail* ——

Sir Tim. Not I, by Hell! This is an impudent Cheat, a Trick of that Raſcal there, I ſmoak it out, but I'll ſee 'em all hang'd; I'll to Juſtice immediately: Juſtice! Juſtice! [*Exit.*

Witl. You may hang the reſt if you pleaſe, Father, but I'll take care to hang this little Rogue my ſelf: Come, dear *Lucy*, thou melting Sugar-loaf of Pleaſure, thou art a good Girl, by the Univerſity I always loved thee; give me thy Hand, I'll ſay it once more, thou art my Wife: Let Sir *Timothy* fume, my Mother's Land is 500 *l. per Annum*, and that's enough for us: *Hocus Pocus*, thou art a Maid to day, I'll make thee a Woman to morrow.

Lucy. So much Juſtice you owe me, I'm ſure for your vain boaſting; but look to your ſelf now, I'll be even with you, I warrant you, and turn your Fictions into Real Hiſtory with a Vengeance.

Sir Maur. Now, Lady *Grumble*, are you convinced that Mr. *Witleſs* is not to have my Daughter? Shall we at laſt have the favour of your Conſent for this Gentleman.

Lady M. No, Sir *Maurice*, not as long as I breath; what, do you think I'll admit into my Family a Deſpiſer of Wit, one who knows well enough I'm an Author, and never had the manners to ask me to read any of my Works to him?

Cler. I am not, Madam, ſuch an Enemy to Wit as your Ladyſhip makes me, I love it but as a Gentleman, without either Pride or Affectation; I could Entertain the Company with a ſmall Eſſay of my Poetry, a SONG I made yeſterday, if you could promiſe your ſelves patience enough to hear it.

Lady M. Hear it? Ay, with all our Hearts; who is there to ſing it?

SONG.

LOve, thou art beſt of Human Joys,
Our chiefeſt Happineſs below,
All other Pleaſures are but Toys;
Muſick, without thee, is but Noiſe,
And Beauty but an empty Show.

Heav'n, who knew beſt what Man could move,
And raiſe his Thoughts above the Brute,
Said, Let him be, and let him love,
That muſt alone his Soul improve,
Howe'er Philoſophers diſpute.

Wit. I proteſt the man writes well enough for a Fidler.

Sir Maur. Oh rare! I hope your Ladyſhip is ſatisfied now.

Lady M. Yes, Sir *Maurice*, I'm ſatisfied that that man muſt be your Son-in-Law; and my Reaſon for it is, becauſe he is a Ninny, and a Booby.

Sir Maur. 'Sdeath! what a *Babel* is here? Where are we now?

Lady M. Where are we, ſay you? In the worſt place in the World for Manners ſure; what for a man to be ſo hardy, ſo *Effronté*, and ſo deſtitute of Politeneſs and Compliſance, as to affront Philoſophy to my face, is a Crime never to be atoned for, however Philoſophers diſpute, quoth he: That's as much as to ſay, we are Fools; my Siſter, Daughter, and I, all Fools.

Mean. I never heard my Siſter draw a more natural Concluſion in my Life.

Lady M. But I'll revenge Philoſophy I'm reſolved; and to make an Example of this Unmannerly Compoſer of Songs, I'll inflict upon him the Curſe of a poor ſilly Portionleſs Wife. Sir *Maurice*, whether you will or no, that ignorant Songſter there ſhall have your Daughter, his ſhallow Wit will fit her little Genius, as well as her *Hamburgh* Fortune his ſhatter'd Eſtate.

Cler. Pleaſe your ſelf, Madam, with your mean Railleries, I am ſenſible of nothing but my preſent Happineſs.

Sir Maur. Did not I tell you, *Mariana*, we ſhould carry the day? I knew well enough I ſhould bring it to paſs. Now we are all pleaſed, I hope.

Mean. Only, poor Siſter *Catchat*, ſhe has reaſon to take it ill, that in ſo plentiful a diſtribution of Human Fleſh ſhe can catch nothing, but muſt at laſt take up with her Men in the Moon, or her Viſions and Chimera's.

Catch. Ay, Chimera's; let my Niece look to her ſelf, there reigns one ſtill in *Clerimont's* Heart will make her live uneaſie all her days, let me tell her that, and ſo Adieu. [*Exit.*

Lady M. Inſert this in the Articles, Mr. *Engroſs*; I charge you, that this illiterate Couple ſhall never come into my Houſe, I'll not be peſter'd with ſtupid Creatures, not I.

Sir Maur. Not into my Houſe? By my Lord Mayor I'll leave you, Lady *Petulant*, with your *Jingles* to make Almanacks and Ballads.

Lady M. Yes, yes, the World ſhall ſee how much I value Wit in ſpite of Fools; Sir *Maggot Jingle* ſhall be my Son-in-Law, and for the future none ſhall be admitted into my Houſe but *Beaux Eſprits*; therefore, Sir *Maurice*, think of another Habitation for your ſelf.

Cler. [*To Sir Maur.*] You are Maſter of my Houſe, Sir, and ſhall Command in it more abſolutely than you did in your own.

Lady M. The Kindneſs, Sir, will be ſeaſonable.

Mean.

Mean. Then since you are pleased so impertinently to Insult, know, Sister, to your confusion, that the News from *Hamburgh* is false, that my Niece's Fortune is not lost, but rather improved by a considerable Return. I put this trick upon you to try your Philosophy, and let the World see to the bottom of Female Wits.

Sir Maur. Oh, dear Brother, you revive me! How happy am I, that I have still a fortune to make a Return to *Clarimont*'s Generosity — [*To Clar.*] It is all yours, Sir; give me leave to make the rest of my Life happy in your, and my Daughter's Company, and retire with you into *Essex*.

Mar. This will compleat my Happiness, Heaven be thank'd: I shall have all I could wish for in this World, my Father, and *Clarimont*.

Lady M. And blessed be my Stars, say I, that Ignorance and Wit shall dwell no more together; farewel rude and unpolish'd Crowd: You witty Daughter of mine, follow me. [*Exeunt Lady M. and* Lovewit.

Mean. Brother, let this Day be Celebrated as a Day of Joy and Deliverance to your Family, from the Tyrannical and Arbitrary Power of a Proud, Scolding, Whimsical, Philosophical Wife: You have now got a second that will stand by you, I'm sure. Let not therefore an impertinent Female Wit Usurp again so unreasonable an Empire over you.

Sir Maur. I'll make the best of your Advice to be sure; but, good Brother, whatever the Task may seem to one without Experience, take my word all married men find it a difficult one.

Man first was dest'in'd for the Sov'reign Sway,
But haughty Woman, scorning to obey,
Call'd to her Beauty's Aid, the Serpent's Art,
Surpris'd his Reason, and Ensnar'd his Heart:
Since when we Struggle for our Right in vain,
Their Tongues and Eyes will still the Rule maintain. &c.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. *Catchat*.

I Try'd to leave you, Gentlemen, in vain,
The rest are gone, but I'm return'd again;
And that you're pleas'd, my Vanity discovers,
I'll set you all down in my List of Lovers,
And think you so, whate'er Defence you make;
Nay more, I'll prove it for my Honour's sake,
That none are Happy, but through some Mistake.

The fairest Nymph that thinks she's gain'd a Heart,
And does her Favours, with her Smiles, impart,
Whilst here the Spark practises all his Graces,
Ne'er thinks, alas! they're level'd at new Faces,
Cheated on still by his Perfidious Eyes,
She vainly fancies, 'tis for her he dies.

The Elder Ladies too, of past Renown,
Have their Mistakes; Stale Fortunes of the Town
Think there's no Lord, but might ha' been their own.
And slighting Lovers of their Fancy born,
Starve for that Blessing they affect to Scorn;
At length Despis'd, turn Censurers, and Nice,
And boast of Virtue, 'cause unfit for Vice.

You, Rising Suns, who see their dreadful Fate,
Take Warning, Marry e'er it be too late,
For Youth's the surest Charm to Captivate.

Our Author too, for who so Vain as they,
Would needs believe that you Approve his Play;
E'en humour him for Once, and give him Cause,
Warm him but with the Fire of your Applause.

Then, If again his Muse her Voice shall raise,
Yours be the Merit, yours be all the Praise;
You make the POET, *he but makes the* PLAYS.

FINIS.

Read - Thurs.y April 25th. 1793.
Colley Cibber seems to have thought this no bad Comedy; some parts of the Refusal put one in mind of the Female Vertuosos, which is taken from Moliere.

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